

THE
FORESTERS.

A NOVEL.

ALTERED FROM THE FRENCH
BY MISS GUNNING.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE
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CHAPTER I.

A LEAGUE OF FRIENDSHIP, AND A
VIEW OF THE HOUSE.

WILLIAM recited his misfortunes with an air of dignity so happily softened by the accents of simplicity, as left no doubt of their being strictly true on the minds of his attentive auditors. Marienna never ceased to weep the whole time he was repeating them—Germain seemed to feel less pain from

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the wounds inflicted on his own body than for those that rankled in the mind of his young preserver. As to Villeroi, he was affected in a very singular manner—his eyes, which had in their expression a mixture of many passions, settled themselves on the countenance of William from the beginning to the end of his sad memoir; sometimes they spoke the noble emotions of sympathy, but oftener expressed thoughtfulness; nor were they wanting to throw out momentary flashes of sparkling fury, in so much that the timid narrator occasionally felt himself incommoded by their glances.

Whilst they were partaking of such refreshments as Nature demanded, Villeroi placed William at his side, frequently exclaiming, as if speaking to his own reflection, "Yes, it will do—now can be done."—Then applying to our hero, he would add, "You are very young, my son, to have already acquire

so much experience in the execrable villany of men.—Ah! how well do you know them! how well do you judge of them!—What courage—what philosophy—you interest me in a degree that I am not able to describe.—Dear youth, I build on your qualifications hopes, which are exceedingly dear to me—thou shalt one day know them, but must prove thy virtues before I give thee the employment I have ordained for them. Hear what I require of you—for the space of one year, without asking to know my secret, you shall live in this house—you shall be to me as a son, and I will be to you in the place of that father who has cast you from him.—Further I expect, that you shall shew the same obedience, the same implicit respect to my commands, as if I were in reality the author of your existence—are you ready to vow for me the prompt submission I require from you, in return for my paternal affection?”

"O yes, my father! and in the presence of the Supreme Being I attest the vow with which I bind myself yours for ever." He spoke to Villeroy, but he looked only on the beautiful Marienna.

"Come then," cried the old man, very well pleased, "come to my arms, let me embrace thee as my own, and never forget the sacred engagement into which we have entered."

"Your goodness," replied William, "will make a constant display of it before my eyes; it is impossible I should ever cease to remember it."

"Thank God," returned Villeroy, who has sent thee to give me the only consolation my soul can ever admit: "I have but one friend on earth—it is the good, the sensible Germain—love him as you do me—a faithful servant is a treasure the most precious—you behold my only child—my only remaining blessing—my beloved—my amiable Marienna: be to her a brother—be to her
a master

a master—teach her those sciences, those talents you possess: above all, instruct her in your happy principles of hatred to the world, and distrust of mankind. I am old, my dear children; when I can no longer be with you, perhaps it may be your desire to live in great towns to launch into all their extravagant turbulences.

“Never, never,” cried William and Marienna, both in the same instant.

“I wish to believe you,” said Villeroi, “and I command you to love one another.”

What a command for two fond hearts, which were already united by the ties of inclination.—William was overwhelmed with joy nearly amounting to agony; for it must have been observed, that his feelings were seldom regulated by moderation; as to Marienna, she who never disguised her sentiments, now made no effort to disguise her transports; she held out her hand to William, and

pressed his, saying, "Yes, dear father, I promise you to love him very tenderly."

Soon after they all four quitted their frugal table, when Villeroy proposed to shew his newly-adopted son the convenience of his little mansion; he walked on before, attended by Germain; Marienna followed, leaning on the arm of the graceful William, talking to him of the happy hours they should pass together, and persuading him never to think on the ungrateful world, from whence he had been so cruelly driven.

Whilst she was thus prattling, and looking up in his face with the modesty of an angel, and the fondness of love, Villeroy called upon William to admire the court to which he had conducted him; but William heard only the voice of Marienna, and saw nothing which was offered to his view but the charms of that lovely girl: her father, though far from feeling displeasure at his gene-

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ral absence to all other objects but herself, yet awakened his attention by another summons for him to observe the form of the court, in the middle of which stood the house.—William declared he had never beheld any thing half so charming—he was still thinking of Marienna, yet his answer served very well for both.

“The body of this house,” said Villeroi, “is thirty feet in length, and fifty in elevation.”

“Ah!” cried William, “I have heard of happiness, but never tasted it until now.”

They ascended four steps, and entered into a kind of vestibule, very small.

“How do you like this?” said Marienna.

“Oh! it is magnificent,” exclaimed William.

She was not the only person who laughed at the error of his expression.—They were just then at the foot of a little

little staircase, which they turned from to pass through a door on the right that led them to a room, whose only ornaments were a chimney, a table, some chairs, and a pretty considerable collection of books.

"I call this my library," said the conductor of William: "it is twelve feet by fifteen—I hope you will find it both useful and convenient."

"I never desire to go out of it as long as I live," replied William.

"Yes, you must go a little farther," returned Villeroy, and mounting some stone stairs, paved in Mosaic, brought him upon the first floor—"Here I sleep," said he, as they entered a chamber; "I would have you take notice of its furniture."

William looked round, yet still saw nothing but Marienna, till her father made him look at the bed; some arms, two pictures, four firelocks, and half a dozen maps fastened to the walls, all of which

which he praised with the same incoherence as before, very much to the amusement of his three solitary companions.

The next apartment he entered belonged to the enchantress, who had locked up all his senses; but in this room there seemed to be an active and counter-magic that was to restore them; it contained some fine drawings of her own performance: he admired them with enthusiasm, but he admired them with true judgement. The fine harp-fichord which occupied the largest space of the room caught a share of his attention; he fancied how often her lovely fingers must have touched the keys of this favoured instrument—he sat down before it without being invited to do so, and produced the sweetest sounds of harmony—so soft, so plaintive, as dissolved in tears those, who a few minutes before had made themselves merry at his expense.

Marienna was the only person present who could draw this second Orpheus from charming them in his turn out of their senses—she was even forced to exert a gentle violence to make him forbear, when she could stand no longer against the united powers of voice, words, and music, each in itself enough to have tamed the fury of a tiger.—Suppose we give to them and ourselves a short respite, and put an end to this chapter.

CHAP. II.

CONTINUATION.

HAVING seen whatever is curious within, let us return again, as they did, to the outside of the little fortrefs; let us observe the windows of the granary, which are long, but extremely narrow; the platforms are hewn stone; on the causeway, at the foot of the steps, is a door painted black; at this door Ville-roy made a stop—"This door," said he to William, "leads to a place where none must enter but myself or Germain—but go now with my daughter, she will shew you our garden, whilst we

two old men repose from our fatigue, and wait for your return."

Marienna presently brought her new friend to a spot that perfectly charmed him; besides being large, and producing almost every kind of fruit and vegetables, it had some fine plantations; but above them all towered one majestic poplar, at the bottom of which ran, over broken rock work, a limpid stream, that, escaping from the huge precipices in the torrent, had rolled along till it fell at the foot of the memorable poplar, from thence sprang off, in different directions, striping the verdant grafs with liquid silver; a rustic bridge offered our lovers a passage to the favourite arbour of these solitaires, which the hands of Villeroy had formed—it seemed calculated to inspire tranquillity, and encourage meditation.

"Look!" cried Marienna, as they passed a small plantation of flowers, "these I cultivated alone, but now I shall have
you

you to assist me, we shall make it much finer. Here," said she, arriving at the harbour, "when we have done our work, we will sit down, and take our pleasure; you shall fetch me water from that clear stream, and I will gather for you those fruits of our garden which I know to be the most delicious—ah! William, William, do you think you can be as happy here as you was at college?"—William pressed her hands, he would have spoke, but sentiment had flown away with expression; however, the mute tenderness with which he regarded her left nothing for language to explain. At this critical moment, when nothing was less expected than the presence of intruders, Villeroy and Germain came to apprise them that it was time they should re-enter the house—Germain shook his head—Villeroy smiled—and the young people blushed.

Night was beginning to cover nature with her sleep-creating veil; the birds, perching

perching on the trees, attended the sun's retreat, more inclined to repose in the branches than to continue their day song; the nightingales alone thought it the best time to begin their concert; they raised their melodious notes, and, in sweet responses, answered to each other's summons, to assist in the nocturnal serenade; it was time, therefore, that our little company of recluses should retire, possessing none of those artificial luminaries with which the children of luxury contrive to light them in their pursuits after pleasure, their eyes shut with the disappearance of day, and opened at its earliest dawning.

William was conducted to the outside of his chamber by his three guardians, who, having embraced him one after another, left him to enter it alone; he felt no inclination to sleep, he was too fondly taken up with the image of Marienna; sometimes he would think of his marvellously fortunate situation, sometimes

times on what he should do to preserve the friendship of so charming a family ; but were not these thoughts all produced by Marienna herself?—certainly they were ; his misanthropic humour abated, his heart was cheered, and his suspicions lulled to repose—he hears a noise—he starts—it is somebody turning a key on the outside of his door—he calls out, “ Who is there ? ” he receives no answer ; he runs to try if it will open, it is double locked ; he hears a footstep retreating—“ Good heavens ! what is the meaning of this precaution ?—is my honour doubted ?—am I supposed a robber, a traitor ? ” and he threw himself on a chair, more than half petrified with astonishment.—“ Ah !—No ; ” cried he, “ I am ever to be the victim of deception—I am fallen into the hands of plunderers, who will, no doubt, put me to death, if I refuse to do as they do. Oh, how perfidious to cover themselves with the mask of virtue !—Marienna

rienna too, is it possible Marienna should belong to villains of this description?—is all her artless modesty but affectation? O God! let her be innocent, and I will die to keep myself clear from the guilt of the others!”

Thus restored to his usual habit of gloomy reflection, he recalled all the occurrences of the day; several expressions of Villeroy's formed all his doubts, if doubts he had, into absolute certainties; he saw himself on the brink of a precipice—his head turned giddy—he was surrounded by a thousand phantoms, all of his own creating, and every one of them more frightful than another; his hair stood erect—he trembled from head to foot—he forms a violent resolution of instantly leaving the fatal fortress, even at the risk of breaking his neck; he goes to the window which fronts the garden; he intends to throw himself from it, but large bars of iron impede his passage.—“It is then done,” he cried;

cried; "I am imprisoned every way.—
Ah! Marienna, Marienna, how I pity, yet
how I despise you—so young, so beautiful—and the companion of murderers!
Alas! thou might be ignorant of their
dreadful trade; perhaps they only shed
human blood when thou, dear Maid, art
innocently reposing on thy pillow; per-
haps, at this moment, thou art dreaming
of that William, who is so soon to be-
come their sanguinary sacrifice."

Thus spoke our hero, whilst his face
was still pressed against the iron grates,
from whence, by the pale glimmering of
the moon, he overlooked the court, the
garden, and part of the forest beyond it;
presently he saw—O reader! now grant
him your compassion; put yourself in
his place, and feel, if you can, what he
felt:—he saw the door under the cause-
way, that door of which Villeroy had
made so great a mystery, he saw it open,
and Villeroy, assisted by Germain, come
out of it, carrying a coffin on their
shoulders

shoulders covered with black cloth, and each a lighted torch in his hand.

What a sight for a being so timid, so suspicious; and what courage, what confidence would not have been daunted at such an exhibition? William did not die with terror; and who could have done more than to have survived under it; he even preserved his recollection enough to watch the motions of this alarming procession; they traversed the garden in profound silence; they bore their burden to the foot of the poplar, where they sat it down, but the distance from which he observed them prevented him from hearing what they said, and almost from seeing what they did; he could only distinguish Villeroy and Germain kneeling by the coffin, as if to discover whether the person inclosed in it was sufficiently silenced, at least such was the construction he put upon the scene which passed before him—and he exclaimed, “How few moments may yet remain

remain between me and eternity! doubtless I shall be their very next victim! Oh, my father! Oh, Dumount! why have you forsaken me?"

Just as he uttered these words, a fire seemed to be kindled near the coffin, the flames of which burst with so much brightness, that not only the leaves of the trees were illuminated, but the birds that perched upon the branches, awakened by the extraordinary refulgence, sent forth the most melancholy cries—presently the lights were extinguished, and the whole phenomenon disappeared.—

William now began to rub his eyes—the whole was unnatural—it was impossible to exist in reality—these terrifying visions must be the effect of uneasy slumbers; yes, he had been certainly dreaming; at last he is painfully convinced it is no dream—he throws himself on his bed, giving way to the most agonizing reflections, increased even to horror, by
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the noise he heard of bolts, bars, and keys.

William now, in his own gloomy imagination, was instantly to increase the number of those unfortunate victims, whom, no doubt, had been first plundered, afterwards destroyed, and, to conclude the measure of their crimes, the unhappy traveller was consumed by fire, that, if a discovery should be made of their den, no traces of their bloody profession should appear against them: but why deprive of life one who had nothing to lose? Villeroy must have been the dupe of mankind; he carried on this dreadful trade to satisfy his revenge; and the vengeance he owed them would be satisfied with no smaller sacrifice than all that should fall into the snares he spread for them. Alas! of what crime could William, so young, so inexperienced, have been guilty? what could he have done that merited this terrible punishment?

punishment? it was not death he feared, for death to the wretched loses all its terrors, when we have nothing for which we wish to live; no prospect but of misery, who would repine that the scene is about to be closed for ever? it was then only the cruelty, the deceit of these wretches, who now appeared, to his disturbed imagination, as a disgrace to humanity, which made him so ardently watch for the return of day, when he was determined to resist, and, not without a struggle, resign his life to the knife of this butcher!—he trembled, his blood ran cold; but he was fixed to defend himself with vigour against Villeroy, Germain, and Marienna. “Marienna! could she then indeed be culpable?”

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE CONVERSATION.

AURORA had now chased the heavy gloom of night from the face of nature; the sun, rising in splendid brightness, already began to guild the dark foliage of the forest with its own pure bullion; the violet-coloured sky, without clouds, announced a brilliant day; a delightful freshness breathed on all; the dew-drops stood trembling on the flowers and trees, the zephyrs lightly shook them off; and, as they gently fell on the green turf, to give way to the ardent heat of mid-day,

mid-day, they resembled a shower of diamonds.

All nature beautiful and tranquil, the heart of William was alone sad—pale, languid, and filled with dreadful expectation, he waited the return of light; he no sooner beheld its first rays, but, leaving that couch on which he had tasted no repose, he addressed himself to the Supreme Creator of all that breathes: prayer had a little re-established the calm of his senses; he was rising from his knees, when he heard a voice, on the outside of the door, in gentle accents inquiring if he were yet awake? “Yes,” he cried, “yes; I am now ready for all that can happen to me.”

“It is Villeroy,” continued the speaker, “who is come hither to embrace and conduct you to your other friends.”

William stopped, petrified with astonishment; did he judge too hastily when he concluded it a new snare?—he gave himself

himself up to a thousand reflections; during which time Villeroy, having unlocked the door, had entered the room, but remained motionless, on observing the alteration in his young *protège*; he took his passive hand, which was moistened by the dews of apprehension, whilst he addressed these words to him, with an air of so much tenderness and truth, that the timid William could not resist the conviction they carried to his heart, and his before faded cheek was suffused by the crimson blush of remorse for the errors he had indulged, so degrading to the character of the venerable man, in whose presence he now found himself.

“Is it, my son, because I last night held you in a kind of captivity, that I thus find you plunged in agitation and distress?—Ah! do not injure him who will be to you a father, by harbouring those injurious suspicions.”

“Oh! Sir, I do not; indeed they are all gone, and I am now covered with confusion

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confusion for ever having given way to to them."

"Calm yourself then, and attend to the counsels of him who wishes to eradicate this infantine timidity, which it affects him to discover in you. It is true that I last night locked you in your room, and shall continue the same precaution, which is to me more essential than you can conceive, but it need not fill you with alarm; every day that we pass together I will bestow on you a thousand proofs of that friendship I entertain for you. It is necessary that you do not seek to penetrate this melancholy secret, it is now my only good; leave then to me its undivided possession; merit by your submission, and respect, my dear child, the confidence I mean one day to bestow on you; soon you shall be instructed of my name, my situation, and my misfortunes; I have no doubt but you will be worthy of this trust, and therefore do not mean to hide from you, that I ex-

pect, at your hands, the most singular service; but it is founded on justice, and your gratitude and affection for me will make it easy for you to accomplish. I am old, my dear William; I have been most inhumanly betrayed, and deprived of all that was most dear to me in life; you shall be my avenger—you alone merit the prize which is destined for him who will become so; it is a charming recompence, and will be most valuable to your heart; but do not, I conjure you, press me to further explanation; leave me yet in quiet possession of my design, it shall soon be reposed in your bosom, then you shall be made acquainted with all; but, in the mean time, I must place bounds to your curiosity; I do not blame it as a crime, at your age it is natural; I demand only of you, as the highest favour you can bestow, that you will suffer yourself to be secured in your chamber every night; on this condition live with us; calm these cruel inquietudes,

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itself, with the most incomparable grace, over her fair cheek.

It was not the same gloomy objects, which presented themselves to the view of our hero, that had disturbed the before tranquil repose of the innocent Marienna; it was the voice of love, which, for the first time, begun to speak in an audible voice to her heart, but which was attributed by herself to the happiness she was going to enjoy in the society of a companion who appeared so charming; all these lively images had so effectually banished the drowsy God, that, at six o'clock, she rose, without having once been visited by him. When this child of simplicity was again beheld by our amiable William, how severely did he blame himself for ever having thought of her with distrust; they were presently joined by Germain, and they united their entreaties that their new guest would allow them to judge of his musical

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sical abilities; William granted their request; he sung his romance, and his auditors could not restrain the tribute of their tears; the delicate fingers of Marienna next touched the keys of the harpsichord, and though with far less execution than William, he was enchanted; but, above all, with the verses she sung; they had been the production of her waking hours the night before, the music, which accompanied them, was so soft and melodious, that the good old Villeroy had some difficulty to believe it really the composition of his daughter.

SONG.

Ah! why say that love, in one's youth,
Forms a band that is fatal in age?
Can the morn of our unfully'd truth
Cast a blot on affection's fair page?
Let philosophers say what they will,
They never my love shall control;
Dear William my bosom shall fill,
And govern each thought of my soul.
I know that our hearts are agreed;
His heart speaks a language as pure

As that heart which, to save him, would bleed,
Then weep that it could not do more!
How radiant the fire of love,
When simplicity kindles the flame?
Marienna shall be true as the dove,
And William shall shelter her fame.
Thy bitters, O Love! let me shun;
Fill my cup with sweets to the edge.
Alas! I am lost and undone,
Should my William refuse the fond pledge.

The whole of that day was passed in varied and pleasing amusements—when night approached, William was again locked in his room, but it no longer filled him with inquietude; he enjoyed a sound and refreshing slumber, from which he did not awaken till day broke on his sealed eyelids—it had been decided on the foregoing day, that on the morrow William should commence those instructions which were to teach the artless Marienna some of the accomplishments of her sex and age: he went to her room—Villeroy and Germain to the different employments which were necessary

cessary in the house and garden, so that our young master remained alone with his beautiful scholar:—my readers may judge, in some measure, by the sample I am about to give of this lesson, all the improvement, which in the end was likely to be received by the daughter of Villeroy, from William's instructions—enter then with me into the small room, and let us behold, without interrupting them, Marienna seated at the instrument—one of those hands which should have made the keys vibrate to her touch, held captive by the most elegant youth in the world.

“Marienna, that song which yesterday you sung to us, I entreat you say, Was it on me you made it?”

“For whom but yourself should it have been composed?—there are not, I am sure, two Williams in the world—at least not another I could love so well.”

"That is exactly as I think. I have seen many women, but never a Marienna."

"Ah! surely, my dear friend, you laugh at me. I have not their charms—their accomplishments—their finery."

"Finery is the fruit of art, but charms are the gifts of Nature; and those you possess in their highest degree, and joined to a heart——"

Marienna interrupting him, "Yes! now I know I have a heart—it is but two days only that I have been sensible of it—till I saw you it was a very simple one."

"What, did it never palpitate for your father?—for Germain?"

"Yes, without doubt, but it was a very different sensation—I will ask of my father to explain to me those new sentiments, and then I shall be better able to describe them to you."

"My

“ My God! ask your father to explain them.”

“ To be sure—why should I hide from him that which he will so much approve? No, I will never have any other confidante than himself; and when you and I, William, have been walking together, or reposing ourselves in the little pleasant harbour—when we shall have said to each other a hundred times in the day how much we love, I shall every night repeat our conversation to him.”

“ Heaven preserve me, what innocence!”

“ Dear William, why this astonishment?—my father is very content when I am happy; and if I do take delight in you, why is it your fancy that he will be sorry!”

“ But has he never spoken to you of love?”

“ O truly has he—very often—he has said a hundred times that it is a very dangerous and troublesome passion—that it overpowers the senses and the reason—that it makes one jealous, unjust, and full of suspicion. Yes, indeed, he has bid me very, very often defend myself from giving way to these cruel sentiments.”

“ Very well; then, my Marienna, do you suppose he will approve of those we entertain for each other?”

“ O dear, you are very much mistaken; it is not that sort of love I feel for you—I should be very sorry if I felt any of those sensations which my father has described to me as so unpleasant. So do not suppose in future that I am at all in love with you, for I do assure you I am not.”

“ Guard ever, my beloved Marienna, those pure and simple sentiments—may no others ever find entrance into your breast

breast—nevertheless, believe what I say ; take my advice so far as not to discover them to Villeroy.”

“ William, I shall love you no longer if you wish to hinder me from placing confidence in so respectable a father ; neither must he be the only person who is made acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our hearts—we must also make them known to his old friend Germain.”

“ Oh, to the whole world without doubt—Marienna, you will prepare such woes for us, if——”

“ Dear me, how ?—see how frightened you are at every thing ; so let us quit this subject, and do you endeavour to teach me my lesson.”

“ You do not understand me—if you knew mankind——”

“ Mankind indeed !—why my father or Germain are not of mankind.”

“ Your father is so good, so kind, so generous, that what you say is almost

true—tell me, do you know his misfortunes?”

“No! but Germain knows them all.”

“And have you never known your mother?”

“O yes! how I loved her! and how she used to kiss her little Marienna.”

“What now is become of her?”

“That I cannot tell you, because I do not myself know—I was brought up in a convent until I was eight years old; and Mama often came to see me towards the end of the time I was there—I did not hear of or see her; and when my dear father brought me hither, he told me that his wife, that his son (my brother whom I never knew), was near to us; that they saw us every day, and that in some years I should have the good fortune to embrace them—they must, I fear, have been very unhappy, because my father and Germain never speak of

of them without being drowned in tears."

"But have you never asked any questions of them?"

"It is the secret of my father, as such I respect, without wishing to violate it. I know, for example, that each night he descends with his old servant into the cavern, which is beneath our house; they remain there about an hour, then each retire to their apartment—every year there is one day which they mark by going and doing I do not know what ceremony at the foot of the great poplar: I have never accompanied them, because I am locked every night into my room."

"This same ceremony, then, it was which so dreadfully alarmed me the other night. Marienna, I cannot divine this part of his misfortunes, or what it is has caused them—his wife—his son—alas! they have, perhaps, been the victims of the blackest treason."

"You

"You then believe them to be dead?"

"Doubt it not."

"But I hoped one day again to have beheld them—indeed I cannot comprehend it."

"If Villeroy has need of an avenger of his wrongs, he shall find one in his William, who will espouse his quarrel."

"How tenderly he will love you—this worthy father already has he spoken of you. 'My daughter,' said he, 'when your heart is first sensible—when you begin to love—turn all your affections on William, whom I believe to be worthy of them; but he must first merit the prize I reserve for the signal services that I shall expect from him; if you should not love him, you will overturn all my views.'"

"O Heavens! and did he indeed say this?"

"These

"These were his very words——
would it not then be shocking in us
to withdraw from him our confidence?"

"O Heavens! what a man is this
Villeroi—or rather let me say, what a
beneficent deity—let us then resign our-
selves, my amiable girl, to the transports
of loving, and being beloved—let us
hold inviolable those vows which your
father has sanctioned by his benedic-
tion."

The hours of lessons generally passed
in these kind of discourses, which so
fully explained the tender sentiments
they cherished; nevertheless William,
who wished his mistress to excel in all
the sciences, made her apply more se-
riously, and in the end Marianna be-
came a capital musician, and an adept in
drawing, mathematics, physic, and astro-
nomy: but these studies did not in the
least withdraw her from the pleasing
lesson

lesson she had been taught by him; neither could time nor circumstances ever lessen the impression it had made in her heart.

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CHAP. IV.

SOMETHING OMITTED, AND THE
VOICE IN THE FOREST.

WILLIAM, happy and beloved in the habitation of his friend, had now nearly forgotten all his distresses; music, agriculture, and sometimes the pleasures of the forest chase, varied his amusements; the multiplicity of occupations that employed his moments left him no room for lassitude or discontent. How gentle and pure the pleasures enjoyed by our four solitaries; they possessed in each other every thing they wished—they desired nothing more, except that
a sigh

a figh would sometimes escape from the breast of William when he thought of his father and Dumount—Nature itself appeared to respect the asylum they had chosen, adding to their comforts, by warding off from their little enclosures the thunderbolts which had often struck the tall trees of the forest; the robbers, whom they daily heard making noises and depredations without their walls, had never formed the perhaps impracticable attempt of scaling them. Germain went out but once in a year, that was to go to St. Marcelin to buy seeds and other necessaries, yet had never been stopped but that once, when the valour of William had given him a timely rescue; it was only the interposition of heaven which could have conducted him with safety; in one of these excursions Marienna had gained permission to go with him, when she lost her liberty in the valley of Romain.

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Villeroy, from day to day, studied the character of his young friend; he found it, on all occasions, firm and courageous, and he returned thanks to heaven for having sent to him, in his retreat, the only being who perhaps in the whole world could be capable of serving him in the vengeance he meditated to take of his enemies, before he descended to the grave; he beheld, with satisfaction, the love which had taken possession of his young people; his daughter concealed nothing from him, and he protected the progress of their passion, which, when it should have arrived at its height, he calculated as the most proper time for the disclosure of his mysterious secret.

He particularly ordered Marienna never to suffer the most trifling liberty from her lover; indeed he almost precluded the possibility; he followed them himself every where, observed them with particular attention, and also put Germain to watch over them; but this caution

tion was all useless, William was too delicate, too honourable, to violate, even in thought, the rights of hospitality; and Marienna, by far too pure, too virtuous to commit any action that she would have blushed at acknowledging to her father, whose goodness approved their mutual passion, and had promised one day to unite them for ever!—they could therefore, at all times, express the sentiments they entertained for each other before him; this liberty repressed every improper idea, so that if love, by chance, sometimes placed a bandage on their eyes, reason instantly lighted her flambeaux to discover to them the precipice on which they were standing; shewing them the remorse and dishonour they would feel if they should quit the bower less innocent than they had entered it.

These two young people passionately loved each other, but it was with an honest and pure affection, founded on the strong basis of virtue, esteem, and the consent

consent of a father. The gentle affections of the soul which are not prostituted to any unworthy impulse of the senses, which are content with the calm of sentiment and meditation, which knows neither sharp and biting remorse, perfidious mystery, nor culpable suspicions, but are crowned by the authority of a parent; ah! how very few the number of those hearts which are calculated to feel all the delights of such felicity.

William could not but perceive that all their steps were watched by Villeroy, and his honour felt wounded at the idea that he should be thought capable of such baseness, a sort of humiliation that poisoned all the happiness he had before enjoyed; often after their return from a walk, when Villeroy has broke in upon a delightful tête à tête, often has the feeling youth retired to his chamber; and, unmindful of the regards and caresses he has been receiving from the venerable old man, exclaimed, "Is it possible,

possible, can it really be, that he should believe me capable of such infamy? can he imagine that I am betraying the confidence his kindness has reposed in me? does he suppose that I shall seduce the innocence of his daughter? O Heaven! of what have I then been guilty to merit so unparalleled an affront? ah! will he never understand that, opposed to a heart made up of gratitude and affection, suspicions, injurious as these, will tear it in pieces? alas! mankind, will they never cease to pierce it? O Villeroy! Villeroy! what torment do you not inflict upon me?"

The venerable old man sometimes found him plunged in such sort of melancholy reflections, he demanded the cause of his sorrow, but William would not instruct him in it; the remembrance of his former distresses always served him for a ready excuse; and Villeroy, knowing him to be frank and sincere, gave credit to his assertion; he would
leave

leave no method untried to console him; he would take his arm, lead him to the garden, and, by his careffes and conversation, endeavour to dissipate the melancholy which hung on the spirits of his young protégé.

There is, in the original manuscript at this place, a deficiency of above twenty pages, some of which are quite destroyed, and others partly torn; it however appears, that this vacancy is not very interesting; it chiefly contains an account only of the occupations and the pleasures pursued by our four recluses, and of the progress made by love in the hearts of our William and Marienna; I think it useless to supply this space, which is unnecessary to the history, so I shall only continue the narrative at the place where, in the original, it is again legible.

Thus passed the tranquil days of Villeroy; Marienna, William, and Germain, every evening, when the weather was favourable,

favourable, the toils of the day were terminated by a delightful walk; at the end of which all four seated themselves in the beautiful little arbour, by the side of the limpid river, where they would solace in the enchanting comforts of friendly and unreserved conversation, till the soft dews of evening, falling on their turf seats, made them take refuge in their comfortable home, when a frugal repast was succeeded by the most refreshing and tranquil slumbers, undisturbed, except when the rising sun, and twittering of the birds, announced a new day.

One year had thus passed away; the affections of our young friends had increased so rapidly, that they thought only of an approaching union, and determined, on their knees, to entreat of Ville-roy to grant them the paternal benediction, and to think on some expedient to hasten the august sacrament of marriage, which it was not otherwise in their power to receive;

receive; but the old man, as positive as vindictive, had waited for this moment to disclose to his guest the project he had formed: himself had blown the flame of passion to its highest pitch, in order to be assured of the fidelity with which he may expect to be served; he was not yet sufficiently convinced of the firmness and the courage of our amiable William; he wished to prove if he was inviolably attached to him; he proposed for some time longer to defer that communication, which would constitute his happiness or his misfortune.

William, ever suspicious, ever susceptible, alarmed by the delays of the father of Marienna, renewed his entreaties, that he would give him the object of all his tenderness; but the reply of Villeroy was invariably the same.

“It is not,” would he say, “enough for me, my son, to know that you adore my daughter—that you desire to constitute her felicity—I must also be assured

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that

that your friendship for her father equals your love for her—you must not expect the hand of Marienna, until I have received the most unequivocal proofs of your attachment.”

William demanded of what nature were those proofs proposed, that he might immediately be brought to trial.

Villeroy did not answer; he pressed his hand, sighed, and withdrew, casting on him a most mournful look.

What an embarrassing situation for our young hero—it was now that his thoughts reverted to his early sorrows, and deep groans issued from the bottom of his soul.

One day that he went to cut wood in the forest, he stopped with astonishment on perceiving his own name carved on the bark of a tree; he approached nearer, and distinguishing other characters, at last he read with horror the following words:

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"William, fly from Villeroy—from the small house—if you stay longer there is intended for you the blackest of crimes."

"Barbarians!" cried he, seized with indignation, "what villany lurks beneath this treason.—Villeroy is the most respectable of men—behold then the confidence I place in your infamous accusation; he raised his arm, and with a hatchet effaced by one redoubtable blow the odious inscription; though far from placing any confidence in the warning it gave him, yet he could not dispel a sentiment of melancholy which he vainly attempted to dissipate."

"What hand," said he, on recovering from his surprise, "what perfidious hand could have imparted to me this invidious council? I know no one in the universe—I am unknown to all—who is it then, informed that I inhabit this forest, can make this daring attempt to poison my felicity? Avaunt

from my heart unjust suspicions—in my breast ye shall gain no admittance—far, far from me be every thought which can make you culpable—oh! my more than father—thou design me for the blackest of crimes—thou the most virtuous, the most generous of mortals!—ah! that I could with my arm extirpate this horrid calumniator, who has committed such an outrage on virtue, personified in your shape—but whom can it be?—what interest can excite them to give me this dangerous advice?—is there then any one concerned in my existence?—ah! may it not be my father!—He started—Can it be Dumount? My God! I did not sufficiently examine the writing—by that I might perhaps have discovered them. Ah! if it be indeed thou, most beloved father, most dear friend, come to your unfortunate William! come and let me find safety in your arms. Yes! I now perfectly recollect the hand which traced those characters;

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ractions; insensible as I was, to efface them so hastily.—Ah! whither has my distraction led me—it seems I argue as if the whole world knew of my retreat—No, no! it cannot be! I will reject this too flattering idea—it cannot be that my parent, that the man who called himself my friend, but who also deserted me in the most cruel manner—it cannot be either of them—it is some despicable rascal that would catch me in his snare—I fly from the enemy of my repose—never more will I go from my darling fortress; there my foes will not invade me.

At his return home Villeroy perceived something had disturbed him; he made war against his melancholy—William excused himself as well as he could; but finding conversation irksome, and that his soul had need of solitude, he hastily ran into the garden; having gained the wall which divided it from the forest, his contemplations were broken

by a voice gently calling him by his name.—He looked—he listened—and presently very distinctly heard these words, which seemed to proceed from the wood——“William, your woes are over—throw your eyes on the rivulet which runs at your feet, and read.”

William, awe-stricken, looked upon the water, and saw a piece of paper floating on its bosom, which seemed to have been conveyed from the forest through an aperture in the wall; it was tied to the branch of a tree, which he eagerly stopped, and loosing the billet, his astonishment redoubled on reading these words:

THE BILLET.

“Heaven is at length appeased—William, your affectionate father recognizes in you his beloved son—quit the fortrefs, and the forest of Chamboran—come and join him at St. Etienne, where
he

he waits for you with your and his good friend Dumount—to-morrow at sunset come alone to that part of the forest where a star is formed by the planting of five yew trees—there you will find a sure guide, who will conduct you to the arms of the most unfortunate, but the most tender of fathers.”

What a command!—William called upon the person concealed to shew himself, but received no answer. His father waited for him—he is acknowledged the son of that father—God! in what a moment this intelligence reaches him—how welcome, yet how unwelcome to his struggling heart—what could he do—how determine—*nature* or *love* must be conquered—if love, would filial transports repay the injuries done to love—what an embarrassment—what a cruel embarrassment!

Several moments he remained almost without motion—the whole adventure appeared like a vision of the night—his father

father recalled him—but how had he discovered his remote residence—who could have informed him of his concealment in the tremendous forest—did he also know who had been his protector—doubtless not, or he would have come in person to thank the generous man who saved his son from perishing with hunger—yet it was possible he might have heard that Villeroy had a daughter—ah! that daughter to whom his soul was so tenderly attached—he might even have heard of this attachment—it might have offended him—perhaps it might have been the reason why he did not approach the fortress.

Again he reassumes his mental argument—the letter was not written by his father, or Dumount; it was the hand of neither—what a mystery!—a guide sent to conduct him—what could be more mysterious!—O yes! a pit is certainly dug for him by the calumniator of the respectable Villeroy—there were
some

some secret enemies who sought their separation with a view perhaps to the destruction of both.

All these ideas were the birth of a moment; the next furnished him with quite a new set—the possibility that his father and Dumont might really be waiting for him in the village of St. Etienne, staggered him in the firmness of his first opinions, and shook him with almost convulsive emotions. Nature cried, “Go to thy father.” Love and gratitude united to detain him—where ought he to resign himself—which was the voice that spoke the most imperiously to his agitated soul—it does not signify—unfortunate William! what will become of thee?

CHAP. V.

THE DETERMINATION.

DAY again issued forth from the father of light; the birds saluted her with their liveliest concerts; nature put on the most brilliant garb to do her honour; every thing animate and inanimate welcomed the beneficent rays of morning.

William, accustomed to contemplate and adore this majestic spectacle, now forgot to pay it the smallest homage, though he leaned from his chamber window, as, if in the act of attention to its surrounding glories—alas! he saw nothing

thing—he admired nothing—self alone absorbed his reflections; he threw his woe-wrought glances over the vast extent of forest—his heavy heart beat with impatience, whilst his eyes were trying to trace out the spot where he had, during the course of a long sleepless night, fully persuaded himself, in spite of all obstacles, that his father waited to receive him—he could not see the village of St. Etienne, but he fancied he had found out its situation.—“Romains,” said he, speaking to his own thoughts, “Romains is in the middle, St. Mercellin on one side, therefore St. Etienne must be behind that mountain covered with wood—yes, there is St. Etienne—there too is my father—my Dumount—ever, ever dear to me—Oh! that my eyes could penetrate those obstacles which impede my view—my soul is a better director—at this moment it shews them to me—they are in an hotel, comfortably sitting side by side—ah! certainly

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tainly they are saying to each other, soon, very soon, shall we see our William—he will preserve the reverence he owes his father—he will prefer his father to his mistress—nature has in his soul an empire stronger than love.—Yes, I go, my father—I wish to embrace your knees—to mingle my heart with yours;” then, pausing, he exclaimed—“Ungrateful son! dost thou still balance, still hesitate—ah! love, love—is it possible that thy sweets can repay me for the loss of a father?—Oh! sacred names of *father*, of *son*—shall those of *lover*, of *friend*, master thy influence—No, it is done; Nature thou hast conquered—when the sun no longer dispenses his light on the summit of that mountain, I leave—his breath grew short—I leave thee, Marienna—Villeroy, I leave you for ever.” He uttered a deep groan, then added, “O God! let it not be for ever!—But can it really be my father by whom I am commanded to relinquish all I hold
most

most dear to me in the world?—Yes, it is himself whom I am to meet, this night, at the star of yew trees in the forest—my heart tells me this truth—my heart cannot deceive me.—Hasten then, O glorious sun! to thy setting, that I may be pressed in the arms of my father.”

Influenced by the idea that he should meet his friends in the forest, William went, with a composed air, to the apartment of Marienna, gave her a lesson in music, rather more accordant to the laws of harmony than the thoughts of the master; and, after it was over, to avoid her inquiries on the change of his humour, he went to seek Villeroy, and entreat his permission to hunt in the forest when the heat of the day should be over—alas! his best resolutions were disconcerted by the old man’s embracing him, calling him his dear son, and loading him with a thousand caresses—to complete the victory of love and gratitude

titude over the struggles of filial duty and parental commands, Marienna, at the same instant that her father retired, came running towards him, and laying one of her pretty hands on his, "I have overtaken you," she cried, "because I forgot to tell you, dear William, what will give you a great deal of joy—this very night my father will confide to us the woes which have so long made him unhappy—Oh! how often have you and I wished to be entrusted with this dear confidence—Ah! why do you look upon me so sadly? if you love me no longer, you are an ingrate; and, if I can, I will cease to esteem you. O dear! why do you cry?—is it I that make you weep?—nay, Monsieur, you must not be angry, I have said nothing to make you very melancholy; I may, if you do not love me—I may try to love you less; but remember, I do not tell you that the trial would be worth making; No—no, I assure you, it would not be worth

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William heard this artless effusion of tenderness with his eyes fixed upon the earth, afraid to look, and unable to speak—he knelt at her feet to take the fair hand held out to him in token of peace; he pressed it to his bosom, to his lips; and, rising hastily, fled from a temptation he was not able to resist—more than a father must have been the sacrifice of that moment!

Marienna, who had never before seen him so unaccountable or so deeply afflicted, with her beautiful eyes, moistened by tears, followed his footsteps, unobserved by him, and stopped, when he stopped on the borders of the stream, near the little bridge which led to the harbour; at a small distance she observed all his motions, and saw, with surprise, that he employed himself in tracing characters on the bark of the great poplar.

"Ah!"

"Ah!" said she, softly, "when he is gone out of sight, I will examine what he has written."

He staid a considerable time at his work, which was very often interrupted, to lift his hands to heaven, and to sigh as if his heart were breaking; at last, having kissed the letters he had been tracing, he retired, with slow and solemn steps; by another part of the garden.

Marienna now left the spot where she had been obscured, and advanced, trembling with impatience, towards the great poplar; where, casting her fearful eyes on the fruit of his labour, she had the affliction to find his griefs engraven, though not so deep as her own gentle heart took them from the first impression. William had thus carved with his knife, "O Love! convert not thyself to hate, because I tear my body from thee; thou art ever in my soul; thy image, Marienna, shall go every where with me—Oh! my Villeroy—Oh! Germain, fate compels

compels me to leave ye—accuse me not of ingratitude for a forced flight—you shall see me again—yes, I will one day revisit you.”

Marienna tried to read the whole of these distressing lines, but exquisite sensibility threw a veil over her eyes, a frightful mist covered them—her blood froze—her knees smote each other—and she fell down, at the foot of the tree, without sense or motion.—A long, long time she remained in this situation; and when, by little and little, she recovered her strength, still, for many minutes, her unfaithful memory refused to relate the cause of a shock that had been attended with such severe consequences; she felt that she was unhappy—she knew she had been insensible—but the reason, at first, she could not remember—she rose from the earth—she looked round her, she saw the fatal poplar; recollection rushed upon her senses—she hid her face with her hands, and ran screaming towards

wards the house, calling upon the name of William in heart-piercing agony—Alas! William heard not her cries; he had taken his road to the forest.

Arrived at the draw-bridge, there, once more, his indecision detained him—should he break through all ties, and proceed—or should he return to satisfy the demands of love and friendship?—“Beloved Marienna,” he exclaimed—“respectable Villeroy—dear Germain—Yes, I will go back once more to behold you!—my father—to-morrow will be time enough—I know where to find my father!—Ah! No—Ah! No; I dare not disobey”—and, entering the forest, he proceeded to the star of five yew trees—he had gone about half a mile, and was not far distant from the place of appointment, when suddenly the sky became obscured, soon it emitted streams of liquid lightning, thunder rolled over his devoted head, torrents of rain burst from the cataracts of heaven, and darkness,

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ness, the most tremendous, enveloped all nature as with a robe.

William shuddered at a scene so terrific; he was persuaded that heaven, irritated by his ingratitude, had raised this storm for his destruction—he fell on his knees—he would have fallen dead with terror, if the mouth of a large cavern had not been presented to his sight, by a burning flash, that rather seemed to threaten his dissolution than to shew him a place of safety—he entered the friendly recess to evade celestial vengeance; involuntary dismay shook his limbs—his hair stood erect—he fancied a thousand spectres were meeting and pursuing him—he stopped—he thought he heard a voice—he listened—he heard it again, it was accompanied by another—they were the voices of Marienna and Villeroy—they charge him with maledictions—they overwhelm him with bitter reproaches!—Just and great God! whither shall he fly from the torments

ments of his conscience?—every where these phantoms follow him—every moment he hears their plaintive cries, accompanied by groans!

Let us leave William in his solitary situation, and inquire what is passing at the fortrefs.

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CHAP. VI.

AT THE BRINK OF AN INTERVIEW.

MARIENNA, after having read the lines on the poplar tree, hastened home in hopes to have found William arrived there before her: what then must have been her grief—her disappointment at finding he had not been heard of since her father had given him leave to hunt in the forest?

“To hunt!” cried Marienna, in a phrensy of despair; “O no, my father! William has fled from us—he has quitted us for ever.”

“How

“How do you know this to be the case?”

“Listen! O listen! and I will tell you all his perfidy.” She then recounted to Villeroy and Germain all that she had witnessed in the garden, beseeching them to go in pursuit of the deserter, not, she said, to bring him back—no—that she did not desire, but only to upbraid him with his ingratitude.”

Villeroy tranquilly listened to his untr tranquil daughter; he told her what she had proposed was impracticable to perform—on what side of the forest should they pursue him—what road had he taken—he had been gone an hour—he was young—they old: if they knew his track, it was impossible for them to overtake him; besides, the tempest of the night, which raged with such unprecedented violence—could she expect them to brave the vivid lightning to run after an ingrate—“No, my daughter,” he continued, “this cannot be done

done—but be composed—tune your heart to peace—I promise to bring you back your beloved William—trust me he shall return to you—I promise you also that he shall pay dear enough for the tears he has cost you—retire then for a moment into your apartment. Germain and I will confer on the speediest method by which to restore your truant and your happiness.”

Marienna, who knew the truth of her father, was transported by the assurance he had given her, and having thrown herself into his arms, and pressed her lips on his cheeks, she permitted Germain to lead her to her chamber, and to lock the door of it on the outside—she saw no more of them that night—it was to her a night of watchfulness—a night of torturing suspense—a night of gay hopes, and gloomy despair.

Early in the morning her prison is opened by Germain—he says to her, “Marienna, follow me! you are going
to

to behold your lover." She has not taken off her clothes—she is ready to depart with him that moment,—with a cry of joy she seizes his hand, and he helps her to descend into a place she had never seen before: all the way she is pressing him to walk faster that she might load the perfidious with her anger. We are not going to anticipate our description; rather let us see what is become of William in the cave.

A convict under the hands of his executioner might not have been very ready to change situations with our entombed hero, when after wandering an hour, groping his way in the dark, without any illusion of fancy, he heard himself called, and saw a faint feeble light at a great distance down the cave—"Ah!" cried he, "this is another snare, from which it is impossible I should escape—that voice—that light are inviting me to my destruction."—He paused—he supposed his fate inevi-

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table—life to him who must not hope to live for Marienna, was but of little value—this thought inspired him with courage almost supernatural; and he called out in a firm tone to the man who carried the light, but whom he could not distinguish, “What is your business with me?—if to rid me of life, dispatch it quickly—but take care that you guard your own, for I will not sell it too cheaply.” Instead of answering, the man carried the light farther into the cave; the now intrepid William followed him, resolved to search to the bottom of this extraordinary adventure.

His silent guide had been conducting him nearly an hour; and William, if he had not been fully employed in watching his motions, might have found much entertainment in viewing the beauties of his subterraneous prison, diversified with so much taste, that it would rather have appeared the work of art than of

nature: here a superb petrefaction—there walls shining like diamonds—now a small rivulet gushing over burnished pebbles, and then playfully making its way through craggy rock-work.

At the farther end of this grotto the guide opened a door, and immediately disappeared; a lamp suspended from the ceiling shewed to William, as soon as he was enough collected to look about him, a superb temple, the pavement and columns of which were black marble; melancholy, and even dreadfully magnificent was the whole of its appearance. William tried, but the door was fast; his conductor had locked it after him—he could now only have recourse to observation to evade the horrors that were again pressing upon him—the first thing that attracted his notice were some steps, which having ascended, he looked over a sort of marble fence, from whence he beheld a tomb, and descending by another flight he saw a tablet, on which

was

was represented two figures of a woman with a young child.

Such objects as these were not calculated to vanquish the gloom of his mind; he wondered what was intended by betraying him thither; he could no more account for the absence of his guide, and was beginning to repent of his too great confidence, when behold once more the door is opened—Heavens! could he believe his senses! It was Villeroy who entered—O earth, wilt thou not open to hide the shame, the remorse, the confusion of poor William!

CHAP. VII.

THE INTERVIEW.

“**INGRATE!** ingrate!” said the old man, in a tone of reproach, “where are your promises? where the vow you so solemnly made to me on the day when I first received you under my roof—you have renounced the one; you have broken the other—I expected just the sort of conduct you have evinced—I wished to prove you to the very bottom, because I suspected you of weakness.”

William half raised his eyes towards his venerable friend; they were filled with

with the tears of contrition—they also testified some surprise.

“ I see,” continued the old man, “ that you are sorry for your fault, and that you do not know how to account for my discourse ; I shall therefore take the trouble to explain it—understand then, that I inscribed on the tree those lines which abused myself, and filled you with resentment for the supposed injury done to me—so far it was well—the contempt with which you cut them from the bark pleased me, but your trials were not yet finished—to assure myself of your friendship, and what degree of confidence I might safely repose in you, I invented that letter from your father. Ah ! Ingrate, it was there you failed in your allegiance, and would have flown from me on the first temptation that offered itself.”

William would have fallen at the feet of Villeroy—by what is he prevented from doing so? The door opens a
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second time—he sees Germain—but it is not the appearance of Germain by which he is petrified—he sees also the beautiful Marienna—beautiful even in anger, and by the most natural mistake in the world, instead of dropping at the knees of the father, he falls at those of the daughter, who, forgetting to chide the penitent, pleaded his cause with so much eloquence, that whilst he was allowed to give his reasons for the crime he had committed, pity stole upon their hearts, and forgiveness followed; they even acknowledged Marienna was in the right when she declared that as his intentional fault had its source in filial affection, they ought to consider it rather as an excess of virtue than a sin of ingratitude.

William was now permitted to embrace them one after another, and the lovely Marienna, covered with blushes, did not hastily retire from the arms of her truant.

Peace

Peace being restored, joy more animated than ever took possession of the young lovers; yet they did not forget to remind Villeroy of the promise he had made, that he would recount to them his history. "I shall do so," said the old man, and began after this manner:

CHAP. VIII.

FIRST PART OF A TALE.

MY real name is Dorance; my father had the honour to be president of the parliament of Grenoble, a respectable body, who, at all times, have set an example of equity and firmness. I was educated at Paris, under the tuition of a governor, wise and enlightened; whilst I studied in the college of *De Beauvais*, I had the misfortune to commence a friendship with the Chevalier Longuville; we were both young, lively, ardent; our dispositions, in all respects, seemed

seemed to assimilate so well, that, in a short time, we became almost inseparable.

Longuville had no parent—the same tutor, who superintended his education, had also the care of his fortune: on leaving college, I engaged him to go with me to spend some time at Grenoble; during our course of studies he had been there, with me, to visit my father, who was nearly as partial to him as to myself.—Longuville consented to our joint invitation with a great deal of transport, and I have reason to suppose he, at that time, loved me very sincerely.

By the advice of my father, who divided his affection between us as if we had both been his sons, we fixed on the bar for our profession, though Longuville seemed to have a stronger liking for the law than I had: from the time this plan was settled, I could not but observe, that every day he became

more and more serious; I thought too that his professions of friendship to myself had very much abated; in a word, I found him distantly civil, and coldly reserved. I spoke of this change in my friend to my father, who could see no fault in his favourite; on the contrary, he assured me, that what I complained of was a virtue, that it shewed solidity of mind, and a wisdom of character which deserved admiration; he would bid me consider him well, and follow the example he set me; but, above all things, never, by my ill-founded suspicions, to run the hazard of losing his friendship.

My father was the best, the most beneficent, the most sensible of men, I therefore supposed him to be in the right, and myself in the wrong; under this conviction, my esteem for Longville, instead of abating, very much increased, and I did all I could to regain his confidence, being persuaded I must
have

have done something or other which had made him withdraw it from me.

My father was intimate with the Baroness *De Myrsange*, the widow of an officer; she had fixed her residence at Grenoble, and was the mother of one child, a beautiful, amiable, and adorable daughter, one whom I could never behold without emotion; every night my father, my friend, and I made up little parties at the house of Madame *Myrsange*, and my passion for Adele grew so strong, that I could not help revealing it to Longuville; but what was my surprise, my astonishment, to find him receive my intelligence with indignation, instead of indulgence.—“What,” cried he, “dost thou dare venture to love Mademoiselle *Myrsange*!—pish! do not stuff my ears with such nonsense—thou, thou indeed love that girl—what, place your wishes on a little adventress?—pray who is there that knows any thing of their family, or their fortune? She and

her mother, it is true, make a respectable figure enough, but they have lived here only three years; is that a time sufficiently long to find out people's real characters?—from whence came they? perhaps—Oh, for God's sake! Dorance, open your eyes—I cannot help shewing you your folly—your father never can consent—he never will consent to a match so monstrous, so preposterous; I swear, if he should ask my advice upon the matter, I shall never give it in favour of this marriage; I love you too well to push you off a precipice.”

I was so unprepared for this sort of resistance, that I hardly knew how to take it, still I believed he meant well; therefore I did not resent his freedom, but let him rant on, without interruption, resolving to speak, once for all, when he had done with the subject, which he seemed in no haste to lay down.

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"Mark what I tell you, Dorance," continued he; "if you should, after all, marry this girl, you will sorely repent it—she is a vixen, a coquette; proud, imperious, deceitful in the extreme."—I could have held out no longer, but my father just then coming into the room, I did not desire to carry on the conversation; for though it made no unfavourable impression on me in respect to Mademoiselle *De Myrsange*, on him, I was afraid, it would have had a very contrary effect.

He asked us to attend him; he was going to the bar in order to plead on a very interesting cause. "A young couple," said he, "who married from inclination, without consent of friends, are, in the space of three months, become so perfectly odious to each other, as to sue themselves for a separation, now mutually complaining of injuries, as they have before boasted of their affections."

Longuville

Longuville saw me change colour at this accidental circumstance; and, the more to force me to bring the application home, made a long solemn dissertation on the dangers of unequal marriages, painting them with the most expressive energy.—Here, for a time, ended our communications on the subject of love and Mademoiselle *De Myrsange*.

My father, soon after, desired to know my opinion of that young lady; the fear of his resentment made me hesitate, but he soon brought me to an explanation, by adding, “There was no young woman whom he should prefer to her for his daughter-in-law—I understand she is not indifferent to you—speak plainly, can you love the amiable Adele?”

“I more than love—I adore Mademoiselle *De Myrsange*!” cried I, with avidity.—“Ah!” cried my father, “then you fulfil the wishes of her mother and myself; we desire to ripen this mutual preference,

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preference, and, on one condition, Adele is your wife." I assured him there could be no condition to which I was not ready to submit for so gracious a reward; and he told me I must return to Paris, as the only place where I might, with profit, study the duties of that situation to which, on his death, I should find myself exalted. To me this command appeared a harsh one, but I had given my word and durst not recal it: he saw the violence I did to my heart, by the sacrifice he demanded of me, and had the goodness to assure me that, at the expiration of one year, I should return and become the husband of Mademoiselle *De Myrsange*, which made me quit his presence the most transported of men.

I would not speak of this projected marriage to Longuville, lest, ill as he thought of it, he might endeavour to prevent my father's intentions; I only told

told him of our intended journey to Paris; that we were still to live like brothers, to lodge in the same house, and to be recommended, by our common father, to the care and friendship of the best man in the world, his very particular acquaintance—the name of this gentleman was *De Calegieux*, counsellor of parliament, and a very wise old senator.

Whilst I was speaking his countenance betrayed symptoms of vexation; he did not even say he was pleased that we were to pursue our studies together; but when I mentioned that we were to begin our journey the next morning, he turned extremely pale, and only saying, if that was the case, he must order his servant to make ready, he left me abruptly, and, for the remainder of the day, we were not alone together. In the evening we were to carry our adieus to Madame and Mademoiselle *De Myr-*

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sange, where, I can only say, I did not receive, from the charming Adele, any of those delicate indications of that particular preference with which my father had too much flattered my expectations; her impenetrable coldness made me feel that I was not near her heart—I supposed myself injured by her want of sensibility—I could not hide my chagrin; her mother took notice of it; and, as we got up, she opened her arms, and pressing me between them, repeatedly called me her dear son, ordering Adele to permit that I should embrace her, which she positively and angrily refused to do; her mother persisted, and, at last, so far conquered her obstinacy, that Adele condescended, very coldly, to receive my awkward, my embarrassed farewell; as to my friend, she made no difficulty in accepting it from him.

During our journey to Paris Longuville seemed to have entirely lost his spirits;

spirits; and, on our arrival there, they were not at all mended. Once I heard him exclaiming, as I came into his apartment, "Great God! what an unfortunate wretch am I!"—"Of what ill fortune do you complain," said I, "which you will not disclose to the friend who tenderly loves you?"—"Oh! nothing," he replied, "only my health is fast falling into decay; I am subject to tremblings, palpitations, and all sorts of inquietudes, which prevent me from repose by day, or sleep by night." I laughed, and told him he was troubled with the vapours. "The vapours!" he retorted angrily; "you are very cruel, Monsieur—very inhuman." "Pardon me, dear Longuville," cried I; "can you suppose I meant any thing but to drag you out of your dejection?"—"Well, well, it may be so—but you are happy, I am miserable; for this reason it is that we do not understand each other."

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We had not been more than two months under the roof of M. *De Calégieux*, when the melancholy that oppressed my companion had like to have met a fatal termination; he was taken extremely ill, and the physicians, who were consulted on his malady, assured me, that their patient had some concealed grief, which, if not revealed to them, the whole college united could do nothing to save him from the grave!

Alarmed at this report, I re-took my station by his bed-side, which I never quitted, day or night, except to talk with the doctors apart.

I found him just awakened from an unquiet slumber; "Longuville," said I, taking one of his cold clammy hands, which I pressed between my own, "does a friendship, so immutable as what I feel for you, demand no confidence in return?—are you resolved to die, and to hide from me the cause of your death?"

Ah!

Ah! speak—dearest, best, beloved Longville?—tell me what it is that preys upon your distempered mind?—if your life could be prolonged, without giving up this fatal secret, I would not demand it of you—Oh! that it depended on me to preserve a life so dear to me.”

“You love me,” said he, in a feeble voice, and a pressure of my hand quite as feeble; “yes, you love me; you may serve me—you may save me.”

“Suspense in our situation—there is no time for indulging—tell me what I am to do—and judge whether I shall refuse any thing that you can ask of me?”

After a thousand efforts to speak, which were interrupted by fainting fits, he announced the words love and despair—immediately it struck me that he loved Mademoiselle *De Myrsange*; and, at the moment, I thought I could have resigned her to him, rather than see him
expire

expire for her ; my heart felt a degree of joy, which it never before or since experienced, when he recovered strength to give me the particulars which I am now going to repeat.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

ANOTHER TALE.

“**K**NOW, dear Dorance,” said the dying Longuville, “that on our arrival at Grenoble I flew to visit one of my relations, named Madame des Roches; at her house I met a respectable old man, who had with him a daughter; this lovely girl was no more than sixteen!—O Dorance! Dorance! never was beauty half so captivating—never talents half so brilliant—never graces half so ravishing. Ah! pardon what you will

will be apt to call a slight upon the charms, the endowments of your Adele, you know my opinion of that little person—yet I do not deny that she is handsome—but indeed, indeed her light flaxen hair gives an insignificance to her features, which the dark glossy ringlets of my Rosine does not convey to her animated countenance.”

He stopped—he had raved himself out of breath—his head fell back on the pillow—his eyes closed, and it was some minutes before he could proceed with his narrative: at last he turned again towards me, and continued speaking.

“ My relation, Madame des Roches, as soon as her visitors were gone, informed me that the sweet object of my adoration was promised in marriage, and against her inclinations, to a young Colonel—that her father, covetous and ambitious, was then in the town, and that

that the match would soon be accomplished. Madame des Roches saw my distress—she loved me as you love me, and she pitied me as you pity me. At her house I often saw my charming mistress, whose heart had surrendered to me in defiance of a prior engagement, made without its own consent. Ah! my Dorance, behold the cause of that reluctance with which I tore myself from Grenoble—of the melancholy with which you have since so often accused me—of my sickness—and perhaps of my death.”

“Fear nothing,” said I; “now that we know your disorder, we may next find a remedy for it, either in good fortune or philosophy.”

“Let it be in the former,” cried he, “in the latter I shall seek for it to no purpose.” He took another gasping time, and then returned to his subject—“The evening before our departure from Grenoble

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noble the enchantress said to me, whilst rivers of tears deluged her blushing cheeks, 'Dear Longuville, we must be for ever miserable; my father has this very day declared to me in form, that at the end of one year he will present my hand to the Colonel, who can never be to me any thing but an object of detestation—he is going,' added she, 'to make one campaign, and when he comes back—O Longuville'——I interrupted her, and we mingled our tears together. In this deplorable state I was forced to leave my soul's dearest treasure—I had not courage to resist the commands of your father, whose goodness has taught me to consider him as my own, and at the risk of my senses I accompanied you to Paris—the only comfort I brought away from Grenoble was the promise of Rosine, that she would write to me, and a fortnight ago I received this letter from her," taking a folded paper from

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his bosom—I offered to spare him the fatigue of reading, but he chose the office, saying it would very much relieve him to retrace the characters which she had written—these, as nearly as I can remember, were the contents:

LETTER.

“ Pardon, dear Longuville, that I have not written to you sooner; my father watches me without ceasing, and since the departure of the hateful Colonel he has been at my elbow every moment—I have not so much as been able to see Madame des Roches. Can you guess what a sacrifice is expected from the poor Rosine—how can I tell it you—I am to be placed in a convent till that horrible Colonel comes back to claim

claim me as his property. I retard as much as I can the moment of my captivity; but, alas! it will come—write to me—there is no other consolation left for the wretched Rosine.”

Longuville having by great exertion brought his eyes to the signature of her name, he replaced it in his bosom, and spoke no more for nearly half an hour; then, at a moment when I was plunged in a deep reverie, he made me start, by calling out in a quick voice, “Dorance! Dorance! it is this letter which causes my illness, which will cause my death, unless you have the goodness to write for me; you are very sensible how much it is out of my power to guide a pen, and it is your condescension only that can save me from those excruciating torments that will not let me recover, though I wish to live at least till I shall have convinced you of my friendship and my gratitude.”

I readily agreed to his request—the materials for writing were set before me, and, as he was able to dictate, my pen made the expression of his sentiments, but not without some considerable pauses.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

A LETTER FROM THE SICK BED.

“OH! what pain, my dear, my gentle mistress, did your letter convey to the bleeding heart of your devoted Longuville—you shut up in a convent—you in one year to be liberated by my rival—perish first that rival—perish the whole world before I will submit to lose you—we love each other, and death only is strong enough to disunite us—the obstacles by which we have been severed, would, I thought, have cost me

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my life—I have been at the gates of death; but a sincere friend, whose heart is excellent, has by his kindness delivered me from the tomb—to this friend I have confided our situation—he is another self—without knowing you, he partakes of our mutual woes—it is this very friend, whose hand is now tracing those characters of which my own, debilitated by sickness, is totally incapable—if Heaven restores me to health, I shall go secretly to Grenoble.”

Here I interrupted him to ask what he meant by that sentence, but he prayed me to proceed, and promised he would explain himself as soon as the letter was finished. I would by no means thwart him in the weak condition to which I saw him reduced, and continued writing after his own words.

“I shall go to the house of Madame des Roches—I shall remain with her some time, where I hope often to have
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the felicity of beholding you, and to renew those vows of everlasting love, which on my part never, never shall be broken—this hope reanimates me—I think of you—my woes are forgotten.”

Here ended the letter—Longuville made every exertion to sign his name, but the writing was hardly legible. I afterwards sealed, and by his direction addressed on the cover—To Madame des Roches, rue Perriere à Grenoble.

As soon as this business was finished, one would have thought a salutary balm had circulated through his whole tottering frame—his eyes were restored to some part of their vivacity—his lips were tinged with crimson—but he added, as he fervently pressed my hand, in token of his gratitude, “This, my dear Dorance, is not the only service I expect from you—you have given me life, but, if you desire that I should enjoy it, you

must permit me to steal away to Grenoble to see my divine Rosine."

"How is this possible?" said I.

"It is very possible," he replied, "if we work together; I foresee your objections allow me to obviate them—whilst I am there you must write to your father that I am getting better, or what you please; I will also send you letters from thence, that you might inclose them to him."

I felt my face glow with indignation at a project so full of deceit, and refused it altogether: my firmness brought on his fits with more violence than ever; his phrensy was so great every time he came out of them, that there was plainly no alternative—I must lose my friend, or I must degrade myself—I was not long undetermined; both were terrible, but I did not chuse to be the murderer of him whom I dearly loved—I promised—he revived, and from that hour his recovery was astonishingly rapid.

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The day before he set off for Grenoble he said to M. de Calegieux, that he was going to recover his strength at a hermitage near Auvergne, and that his return should not be protracted above two months—"It is useless," he added, "to inform our father Dorance of this, because he may disturb himself by supposing that my health is really worse than I believe it to be, though my constitution, so shattered by sickness, must require a great deal of mending." M. de Calegieux was satisfied with his reasoning, and he departed in high spirits.

At the end of two months I received a letter from him, the contents of which are for ever imprinted on my memory.

"My friend, I am the most happy of men; Rosine loves me—she loves me for ever—her father has given up the convent scheme—but he watches her with the eyes of an Argus; yet love finds

a way to elude his watchfulness—I see his charming daughter from time to time at the house of Madame des Roches, where I have been safely concealed ever since my arrival: not a soul in the town has seen me; the habitation of my relation is in fact an hermitage, where one might find all the pleasures, and escape all the torments of life. I told you I was happy—I am far, very far from happy—that love which you so well understand yesterday tied a bandage over our eyes—I thought I had made myself happy, but the extreme misery into which I have plunged Rosine has convinced me that I am only guilty—ah! why did prudence desert her for one moment—and why did I take advantage of that one weak moment—ah! my friend, give me all your eloquence to console the beauty my passions have seduced. Rosine accuses me of her misfortune—it is very certain she cannot
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now be the wife of him for whom she was destined—if I am not her husband, she dare not take any other: O that I could reanimate the virtue which has given way to my entreaties! O that I could restore to a drooping flower its original sweetness, its first freshness—alas! that I cannot do this—that I cannot give back her innocence, drives her to despair, and her reproaches distract me.—Dorance, my dear Dorance, pity me—write to me—if possible, console me—though my own affair so much engages me, I must tell you what is said of your Adele—it is reported of her that she is tormented with a chagrin, for which she will not, and her friends cannot, account—she is become clumsy, pouting, and grumbles at all the world—there are such scenes every day between her and her mother—my friend, I no longer blame you for loving—but if you should not be favoured with a return,

it will be no great wonder, for Mademoiselle de Myrsange, if report speaks truth, hates every body—you know my opinion—it is always the same—adieu—and reflect.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

WE PROCEED IN THE MEMOIR.

I FELT sensibly the whole effect of my conduct by the receipt of Longuville's letter; I even accused myself as being accessory to his crime of seduction in having aided his hypocrisy—another idea tormented me; I was divided in my opinion whether it was not my duty to inform the Colonel of the trespass that had been committed on his honour, and to hinder an honest man from being so cruelly deceived—but again I considered that I was the vile agent of a crime which

which would cover my whole days with dishonour. I could yet determine on nothing, except to upbraid Longuville, to whom I wrote with all the severity of offended probity; I bade him chuse a confidant as worthless as himself, and commanded him neither to write nor speak to me any more.

I heard nothing from him for the space of four months, at which period I received, from Madame *De Myrsange*, the afflicting news that my father was no more: this terrible intelligence hastened me to Grenoble, and I found the paternal mansion, once so pleasant, in a state of deplorable sadness; I could not bear the thought of making it my residence—I had but few relations in the town, and resolved to quit it as soon as I had received the hand of Mademoiselle *De Myrsange*.

Though I had forbidden Longuville to intrude on me, I thought him extremely ungrateful, knowing I was in
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the same place where he had concealed himself, that he did not take some steps towards a reconciliation; I felt that I wished to grant him my pardon; I even went to that part of the town where I knew the house of *Madame Des Roches* was situated—I learnt, in that neighbourhood, of her having quitted her residence there eight days before my arrival at Grenoble, and I entertained no doubt but that she had taken with her the guilty, unfortunate lovers; neither could I get any intelligence of the old man, father of Rosine; indeed I did not know by what name to inquire, and, for fear of betraying the abominable secret, the questions I asked were so vague, that I did not expect they would bring me much information.

On my return to Grenoble I flew to visit my mistress; alas! I found that she too well answered the description given of her by Longuville, her person, as well as her manners, having undergone
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a total revolution; she was grown fat, and dressed with carelessness; she was always out of humour, and discontented with every body; however, in presence of her mother, she treated me with a sort of constrained civility, which made it impossible for me to disengage myself from the contract entered into by my father—I wondered how it was possible that I should ever have loved her?

I very often endeavoured to prove the nature of those sentiments she entertained for me, and if it appeared that she had no partiality in my favour, it was also equally clear that she had no repugnance to espousing me. The day, the hour of our union arrived; I conducted Mademoiselle *De Myrsange* to the altar without joy, without grief—but with a sentiment of the most perfect indifference.

We were attended to church by a few of our friends; on our return home my wife demanded a private interview of
me

me and her mother, which we readily granted—her first action filled us with astonishment—she threw herself at our feet, her eyes streaming with tears!

“My mother!” said she, “*you* have constrained me to marry Monsieur—*you* know what combats I have gone through to obey you—recollect how often I have been repulsed from your bosom—husband! mother! in the name of heaven—Oh! in the merciful name of God! let me be my own mistress till I have made myself worthy of the blessing I know you, in your goodness, intend for me—it is my own fault that I do not, at this moment, think myself the happiest of women—allow me a little time to insure my affections, to teach them obedience; I ask only for two months of reflection—Oh! my mother, and you, Monsieur, grant this petition, and save me from distraction!—let me, for the time I have proposed, retire to your sister, my kind, my respectable aunt, at St. Marcellin—
let

let me be my own mistress—let me receive no visits from my husband.”

Strange as this request appeared, and mortifying as strange, yet I agreed to it without doing my heart much violence: I presented my hand, and forced her to rise; I strove to soften Madame *De Myrfange*, who loaded her suppliant daughter with reproaches, and, at last, wrung from her a reluctant consent, but not till I had cast on her some sharp reflections for that conduct of which Adele had complained, not more injurious to her than to myself.

“Monsieur,” said her mother, haughtily, “do as you please, you have now the sole right over her conduct—the part, of which you both accuse me, was taken with a view to your mutual felicity—she has made the misery of my old age—here I resign my power—let her go, or let her stay, this is the last moment in which I will see her face, or hear the sound of her voice:”—saying
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ing this, she suddenly quitted the room, and afterwards refused a letter, which I asked of her, to introduce the poor Adele to her sister Madame *De Reigny*. Within an hour she set out in my carriage with her maid; I went out of town with her a few miles, so that it was supposed we went together; and when I chose to have it known that I was come back, which was not till several days after, I pretended to have been recalled by business, and that I had left my wife with her aunt.

Adele sent me, by the return of the carriage, a letter filled with thanks for my indulgence, and assurances that the generosity of my conduct should never be obliterated from her memory, nay she ventured to promise me the possession of a heart which was already beginning to interest itself for my happiness.

A husband without a wife, I hardly knew how to dispose of myself; I therefore

fore continued another month at Grenoble, and did all I could to raise the spirits of Madame *De Myrsange*—but in vain were my efforts—her remorse at having forced her daughter's inclinations, and for the vow she had taken never more to behold that beloved child, broke her heart, and, at the end of a month, I had the affliction to see her expire—though she would not see, she forgave her daughter, and died pronouncing on her both the most ardent and the most tender blessings.

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CHAP. XII.

A VISIT TO THE BRIDE.

FROM this time my residence at Grenoble became extremely insipid, and I resolved to fix myself at Paris. I often thought of my wife, but I thought of her only with compassion; as I was her husband I wished to persuade her that we might make but one family, and that she would go with me to Paris; with this intention I went to St. Marcellin—my visit was preceded by a billet, that she might be allowed a day or two to prepare herself for expecting me.

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On arriving at the house of my wife's aunt I was received by a niece of her late husband's, a Madame de Raymond, whom I had never seen; but she had a freedom in her manner that made her address me as if our acquaintance had been of a long standing.

"My dear Monsieur," said she, kissing my cheeks one after the other, I am quite glad you are come; ever since the receipt of your melancholy epistle about the old lady's death, poor Madame Dorance has been so ill, we all thought she would have died—in vain my aunt and I have tried to console her, poor little woman, but you must go and see her—you cannot think how very ill she is—you will find my aunt at her pillow, for she never stirs from her a moment."

This lady talked so fast, and so much, that she did not seem to desire or expect an answer, so I followed her to my wife's apartment,

apartment, without speaking; for the alarm I felt on hearing this once beloved Adele was in danger convinced me that it was in her power to reclaim my heart, whenever she offered me her own in exchange for it.

As I approached my wife I saw her poor old aunt, who from age and infirmities seemed to totter on the brink of eternity, sitting by the side of the bed, and holding one of Adele's hands—this good lady, who was almost blind, could not see me, yet hearing I was in the chamber, she would have got up to give me a cordial welcome, but I prevented her; and kneeling by her, taking the hand she held, which I tenderly pressed to my lips, I spoke to my wife in the most tender and soothing accents, I assured her of her mother's forgiveness: "And now," said I, "except your aunt and myself, that you have not another friend in the world, I hope she will

will have the goodness to resign you to my tender care, and that you will no longer have any objection to putting yourself under my protection."

"Alas!" she replied, in a mournful tone, her voice languid and feeble—"alas! you are too good—the flights I have shewn you will fill me with eternal remorse—yet I must still intrude on your patience—you see to what an extremity grief has reduced me—spare me then the time that yet remains of what you allowed me—give me these precious moments to lament the loss of the best, the dearest of mothers—dear Dorrance, refuse not my petition, it is not dictated by indifference—that has been already conquered by your generosity—go, dear husband—go—when next you see your Adele, you shall not find her unjust or ungrateful."

She was covered with tears—there was no resisting her pathetic eloquence:

I promised

I promised every thing she asked of me—recommended her to the care of her respectable aunt, and departed from the house as much in love as in the days of our early acquaintance.

I could not but observe that the flip-pant lady, by whom I was first received, seemed to take a great deal of notice of every thing that passed between me and my wife; not a word did she lose for want of attention; she congratulated me a thousand times, whilst I was taking some refreshment, on the felicity that was in store for me with so sweet and charming a wife as her dear little friend, and paid me numberless strange incoherent compliments, which seemed to have in them a mixture of some confusion.

From St. Marcellin I proceeded to Paris, where I hired a house in the *rue de Grenelle St. Honoré*, where I soon after very unexpectedly received a letter from Longuville, which had been at

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Grenoble,

Grenoble, and was sent to me from thence.

This letter began with the most penitent submission for his past offences, and the warmest entreaties that I would restore to him my too justly forfeited friendship; he then begs permission to lay before me his past and present situation, continuing his epistle in these words: "Some days prior to the death of your good father, my intrigue with Rosine was discovered by her father, upon which he hurried her to a lodging at *Bourg de Oysans*, which, as you know, is near Grenoble." Madame des Roches, on hearing this news, did nothing but stun my ears with her upbraidings, whilst the father menaced my life—despair affected my senses—my relation was moved with pity—she made me leave that place, and was herself the companion of my flight—you had forbidden me to approach either in person,

or

or by my pen—I am not yet of a sound mind—I break through all restraints to pour out my complaints—to die if you refuse to hear them—Rosine—my Rosine is going to espouse the Colonel—but—how dare I avow it—she is—the dear creature—yes, she is with child—I am more than half mad——.”

I shed many tears over this deranged composition—I sincerely pitied the distracted writer, but could not assist him; had I been able, and inclined to do so, he had given me no address by which I might find his residence.

The time of our separation was nearly half elapsed—my wife, with whom I kept up a tender and regular correspondence, gave me the pleasing intelligence that her spirits, as well as health, were improving so fast she could no longer deny herself the felicity of joining me, and of proving to the end of her life how much her whole heart was devoted

to my happiness, fixing the day of her being at Paris at the distance of a fortnight—my passion, my affections for her, had long been rekindled, and my transports at the approach of this union were exquisite.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIII.

THE PRESENT.

ONE week before I expected this dear wife, when I was very busy in arranging every thing in my family for her reception, a peasant, who would not be refused admittance, forced himself into my presence. I demanded his business—in answer to which he only delivered me a letter—I saw it was the hand of Longuville; and tearing asunder the seal, I read with impatience to this effect:—that he had found out my residence

residence was changed from Grenoble to Paris—that Rosine had made him a father—a beautiful female infant, whom it was necessary should never, never meet the fatal glances of its grandfather, or the Colonel, who within a few days would become the husband of its mother. “If your heart,” said he, “if your delicacy should refuse to aid us in this emergency—if your humanity is deaf to the pleadings of misery—if you do not name at the baptismal font this dear innocent pledge of a guilty passion—if you do not stand forth her adopted father, there can be but *one* resource left for her:—ah! how dreadful is that *one*—to be consigned to a charitable asylum for victims and vagabonds.—O God! there is no, no supporting the idea.”

I read no farther, but turning hastily, asked the man who delivered me the letter,

letter, if he was charged with any other commission.

"Yes, master; I have a little baby, if your honour has got any mind to it."——

"Poor child," I exclaimed, "and where have you disposed of it?"

"In your own court, Monsieur; I brought it so far under my coat."

"In my court!—but what scandal—what indecency—how imprudent. My God!—how can I avoid my fate? what shall I do?—what will become of it?"

"Sir, you are only to say the word, and I will bring you this foundling. Speak, Monsieur, and it will be done presently."

"Yes—no—go—stay—yes—where are you running—stop." My speech and my heart went together; both were trembling, both undetermined, when a neat countrywoman entered, and threw

into my arms the loveliest little infant my eyes ever beheld.

"Take it, my good Sir," cried she, "it is a *God's send*—you will prosper the better for loving it—poor little creature—you cannot have the heart to send it away. I assure you, Monsieur, it is nothing to me and my spouse—it is none of mine, as Jacques can tell very well—for all that, it is a poor little creature."

"*Poor little creature*," repeated I, "thou art indeed a poor little creature." It drew a deep sigh—it fixed its plaintive eyes on my face: "Yes, angel," cried I, "thou shalt not want a father." From that moment I took her to my bosom—I planted her in my heart—I dismissed the man with a gratuity, but retained his wife to take care of my new charge, who had been its nurse from its birth.

"Monsieur,"

"Monsieur," said she, "this pretty child has not yet been baptized; it is only fourteen days old."

"We must name it then," I replied; "you and I will answer for it—but what turn can I give to this adventure? What will the world think of me?"

"You have only to say," replied she, "that you have found and adopted a child of poverty, a deserted infant; and if the world do not reverence your piety, their good-will is not worth the having."

I followed her advice, and the curate of the parish, to whom I recounted my adventure, sanctioned my honest intentions with his full approbation; the same night himself baptized in due form my adopted daughter by the names of —.

Here the recital was interrupted by Marienna's falling down at the feet of the narrator, clasping his knees, and exclaiming—"Oh, my father!—oh, Monsieur! I know not which to call

you—something tells me that I am your child by charity, and not by nature—am I not that fortunate, unfortunate—am I not the innocent offspring of ——.”

In her turn she was interrupted by Villeroy, who, as William raised and pressed her to his heart, bid her calm her agitation, for though she in fact was not his daughter, but the daughter of Longuville, he hoped he had so well acquitted himself in the paternal character, that in preference to all mankind she would feel for him the love, the duty, and the obedience, which would have been his due from her if he had really been her father. “Alas!” added he, “your birth was your *misfortune*—to dispute my will would be your *crime*.”

“Never, never,” cried she, throwing herself on his neck, and wetting his bosom with her tears, “never will I look, or speak, or think in opposition to your commands. O Heavens! what goodness—what generosity——dearest, dearest

dearest father, you will kill me if you do not let me call you father!"

Villeroy kindly clasped her to his heart—it was as much as if he had spoke a volume. He smiled, but there was something uncommon in his smile—perhaps he thought of Longuville—perhaps it was the more languid from the fatigue of much talking. He called for some refreshment, and proceeded no farther in his story till they had all recruited their strength and their spirits.

CHAP. XIV.

VILLEROY'S NARRATIVE GOES ON.

I WAS somewhat embarrassed how to present my little foundling to my wife, lest she might take it into her head that I was in reality the father of it; but all my apprehensions vanished when she gave herself to my arms, adorable in mind and person, with the gentleness of an angel she not only heard me relate my adventure, but adopted her with as much fondness as I had done, and for six years our happiness was not to be equalled.

All

All the love that we could spare from each other was lavished on the child of our adoption; she always called Adele her mamma, and never did mother acquit herself more truly of the maternal character—it was now that we began to commence Marienna's education, by placing her at the convent of *Des Dames de St. Aure sue Du Temple*.

About this time my wife gave me a son.—Villeroy stopped—he wept—he groaned—he remained silent several minutes—“I am unmanned,” said he; “the part on which I am approaching is agony—pray that I might be enabled to relate it to you with calmness?”

Being told that the house my father occupied at Grenoble, which was sold by me on his death, was again offered to sale, I signified to Adele that I should like to become the purchaser; at first she opposed my intention, but, at last, entered into my plan; we left Paris,
she

the nursing, at her lovely bosom, the pledge of our mutual affection.

After our arrival at Grenoble I was extremely busy, for eight days, in making an agreement with the magistrates for a charge, of which I felt myself ambitious, because it had belonged to my father. I was in the midst of this business, when a large packet being put into my hands, I carelessly consigned it to my pocket for the inspection of a more leisure moment; when I returned home I retired to my closet for the purpose of reading what it might contain—but, on surveying the packet, it is impossible to describe my unaccountable emotions—such a coldness seized upon my whole frame as if the vital circulation of my blood had been frozen up—my heart whispered me that I should have nothing to do with this fatal letter—alas! my fingers were not obedient to the counsel of my heart; they had already

ready.

ready tremblingly divided the seal, and my aching sight had cast itself on these odious contents :

LETTER.

Paris, 8—

“ Monfieur, I am no longer worthy to call you my friend—I approach that awful period in which I am to give up the account of my actions at the bar of heaven—I am dying—one wish for life only remains to me—it is to receive your pardon for the crimes I have committed againft you—this I can only do by the hand of another, and, before it reaches you, the miserable writer will be no more ! Hear then, and tremble for the eternal punifhment to which my paffions have configned all that is immortal in my nature—your Adele and my Rofine are one and the fame perfon—the child you nurfe with fo much tenderness.

tenderness is the fruit of our criminality."

Marienna gave a loud cry, and ran out of the room—William would have followed to console her grief, but Ville-roy bade him stay, with an air so stern, that he did not dare to disobey him—the old man seemed to be choaked with rage, and, with some difficulty, continued his reading.

"Yes, Dorance, on the salvation of a dying man, your wife is the mother, as I am the father of Marienna—would to God this was our only crime—but the son you so tenderly love has no other parent than our guilty selves—like the other, he has no claim upon *you*, except of compassion—she will attest to this truth—I was concealed at Paris, and this boy was the fruit of our private interviews. That *Madame Des Roches* was a name only assumed, by the worst of women, for the worst of purposes—her
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real name is Madame De Raymon—you saw this wretched pander of our vices when you visited Adele at her aunt's—that good woman was cheated as well as yourself, and, being not only blind, but reduced to a second state of infancy, she did not know this detestable relation of a husband, whose memory she honoured, had dared to turn her house into a receptacle for two adulterous lovers—the letters of Adele, which you will receive, as well as my answers to them, together with what I am dictating in the very arms of death—Ah! Dorance, at this moment he presses me so close that I cannot"—Afterwards was added, in the same hand—"Alas! Monsieur, the guilty, the penitent, the wretched Longuville has no longer an existence in this world—may he find mercy in another."

"Great God!" exclaimed William, "why does he not yet live, that I might
wreak

wreak my vengeance on the execrable villany of such a monster?"

These words seemed to convey something like pleasure to the countenance of Villeroy; he wrung the hands of his young friend, and bidding him remember them, proceeded in his memoir.

I examined all the letters to which he had referred me—it was too plain who was the mother of Marienna; neither could I doubt that Jules was indebted for his birth to the same father; the letters inclosed made no mention of this most horrible fact—but, in the moment of death, Longuville himself had confessed that I was not the author of its existence.—Like a lioness robbed of her whelps, I flew to my wife's apartment—she is not there—I search for her over the house—she has disappeared—she is gone, and has made the boy of Longuville the partner of her flight!—I run frantically back to her chamber—I look every

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every where about it—I do not know for what—at last this paper I picked up; it had fallen under the table, and, by design, she had left it behind her.—Hear the contents :

BILLET.

“ Fly, unfortunate Adele, your husband knows all—fly, and recognize your old friend *Des Roches* in the maternal service she is now rendering you.”—— To which was added, in my wife’s writing—“ Adieu! beloved Dorance; never shall you again behold the wife who has wronged you.”

I informed myself, by inquiries, of what route she had taken—I mounted my horse, and flew after her like a madman.—I entered into this forest—a man, who observed I was seeking for something, stopped me, saying, if I was in pursuit

purſuit of a poſt-chaife, I ſhould get up with it near the Star. Rejoicing at this intelligence, I ſpurred on my horſe till I perceived, at a ſmall diſtance, a chaife that had overſet; and Adele, with Jules in her arms, ſtanding by the ſide of it, whiſt Germain, my truſty ſervant, my confidential friend, was trying to lift up the carriage. How did this ſight add to my fury!—was it poſſible that Germain too ſhould prove a traitor to his maſter. I aſked no more queſtions of my heart; but coming behind them, with my ſword drawn, I plunged it deep into the boſom of both mother and infant—Germain ran towards me—“Keep off, wretch,” cried I; “and tremble for thy own life.”—“Oh, my maſter!” he cried—“you have killed your penitent wife—you have killed your own innocent babe.” The dying martyr liſted her hands to heaven—“I deſerve death at your hands, but your child has never offended—that God who calls me hence,
who,

who has accepted my tears and groans of penitence, witness for me that, since the time I lived with you, I have never once seen the foe of my honour, the perfidious Longuville!—unhappy husband, I love thee, even in death—try to forget, if possible, that thou hast shed the blood of thy son!”—The last word quivered on her lips, and they closed for ever. The torments of the damned were ease to those which seized upon my soul at the final close of this horrible scene—Germain had no comfort to bestow on me—he fell on the victims of my vengeance—he embraced their breathless forms till he was himself covered with their blood. I would have completed my work, I was going to stab him on the spot; but rising, and wresting the weapon from my grasp—“Stay,” cried he, “till I have told thee all—and afterwards take my life if you think I have deserved to lose it.” I bade him speak. “This morning,” said he, “my lady
came

came to seek me in an agony of terror ;
'Germain,' said she, falling at my feet,
'save my life—save the life of your master—save the life of our son ! Before I married Dorance I committed a horrid crime, of which he is going to be informed—Oh ! fly—hide me, hide me, or we shall fall the victims of his fury !'
Her prayers, her tears prevailed, but not till she had me convinced that Jules was your child—that she never had seen her seducer since she became your wife ; and that he had been, from that time, in America, whither he had gone on her invoking the judgements of heaven on her head if she ever permitted him to see her again, or if she ever proved unfaithful to her nuptial vows. When satisfied of her innocent intentions, fearing a pursuit, I conducted her to the thickest of the forest, there to leave her till I could return and try to soften your heart in her favour—you know the rest—and now kill me, for I am tired of my existence."

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existence." His words carried conviction to my senses—I fell on his neck—I pass over what immediately followed—it was he who would have saved the life of my victims that now prevented me from putting an end to my own.

All at once a calm seemed to spread itself over my soul—"Germain," said I, "mankind have betrayed me; I will no more rejoin them—here I will bury my wife—here my son shall be entombed—and here we will live to feed on the luxury of our sorrows." Germain was as willing as myself to adopt my scheme, and we agreed to keep the whole of this bloody transaction a secret.

The next morning this dear friend went to Grenoble to settle my affairs, and to make believe that I was retired, with my family, to a distant province, whilst I remained in the forest to weep over those dear bodies which, during the night, we had reposed under the foot of the great poplar.

I had

I had one friend, besides Germain, to whom I committed my misfortunes, it was the Duke de ****, governor of Dauphiné; he heard me with more than compassion, and offered me a retreat in the forest of Chamboran; but knowing me long, and loving me well, he first used all his eloquence to turn me from my romantic purpose, and when he found me still unshaken, he assisted me with his own people, and sent all manner of materials to build my little fortress, after my own plan, without the town or its neighbourhood suspecting any thing of the matter. All the time it was erecting I shut myself up in the same cavern which held the bodies of Adele and Jules, being first curiously embalmed and placed in a coffin, so contrived as to render them impenetrable to air or wet—every thing has since been put into better order.

In looking over the papers my wife had in her pockets, I found a letter from
Longuville,

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Longuville, dated some weeks before my crime, by which he informed her of his having been settled five years in New Carolina, from whence he sent her his wishes for the continuation of our mutual happiness, and strongly recommending their little Marienna to her motherly affection.

To be thus ascertained, that the child I had murdered was my own, did not serve to establish my peace—my whole undivided rage now fell upon that son of perdition, the damnable Longuville, who pretended to be dead only, if it were possible, that he might injure me more than ever—ah! too sure, this devilish act was to wreak his vengeance on the head of that poor penitent, who would no longer admit him to her presence. In the moment of my rage I cried out—“This Longuville has a daughter—I am the master of her fate—I will make it terrible as that of my slaughtered Jules; and, without opening

my design to Germain, I took her from the convent, and brought her to this forest."

William started up, desiring he might have leave to go and see what was become of her, as if he had supposed, even at this time, her life was in danger; such an effect had the last words of Villeroy, or rather let us now call him Dorance, on the youth's terrified imagination.

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CHAP. XV.

THE CONCLUSION.

"**N**O, my son, stay where you are," said the old man; "you have nothing to fear for the safety of Marienna; my own soul is not dearer to me than that beloved, that amiable child, yet my vengeance does not sleep—nothing but blood will satisfy it—remember the noble words you uttered on hearing that the traitor who has injured me was no more—renounce them if you dare, and I renounce you for ever!—it was to accomplish this great revenge that I received,

ceived, caressed, and proved your courage—whoever is the husband of Marienna must be the executioner of her father—I do not mean by the dark path of treachery, but in the broad and open field of honour.”

Marienna, who feared the displeasure of Dorance if she sought to hide herself too long from his presence, hearing him, as she came back to the room, speaking in a voice unusually loud, she stopped, trembling, on the outside of the door, and heard, with phrensy, that her lover was appointed to take the life of her father. “William! William!” cried she, bursting upon them with the suddenness of lightning, “say not that you will be the murderer of my father—and you, Monsieur, think not the miserable girl you have charitably protected will become the reward of an action at which nature herself must shudder—he who preserves, not he who destroys, my father shall be my husband.”

Dorance

Dorance rose up, and, without saying a word, walked angrily out of the chamber; Germain followed in hopes of appeasing him; and our lovers being left to themselves, William very soon found the means of restoring himself to the favour of his mistress, and her to some degree of tranquillity.

When the little family reassembled themselves together, few traces of sadness fastened on their countenances; Dorance was composed, nay even cheerful, and the others seemed transported at the change in his humour; he gave Marienna a thousand tender caresses, and received hers as if she had never offended him.

In the evening he took William by the arm, and walked with him into the garden, where he spoke to him in this manner:—"That foolish girl has prevented me from speaking the full of my mind to you; I have brought you hither

that I might do it without interruption, and assure yourself there is no appeal from your sentence—to-morrow, at dawn of day, you pass the draw-bridge, which you shall never recross except it is to bring me back the head of Longville." William, freezing with horror, would have replied, but was not permitted; that night they all assisted at the solemn ceremony which had once so much terrified the poor William. Now that his whole soul was wrapped in despair at the thoughts of leaving Marienna, never perhaps to behold her any more, he regarded the same gloomy objects with almost total indifference; he even looked at the embalmed bodies contained in the coffin, and pierced with wounds, yet hardly knew that he had seen them; and when Dorance told him that this ceremony was performed annually, he started and replied—"Yes, Monsieur, I shall certainly obey you."

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William, getting up at break of day, was surprised to find the family ready to embrace him, all but Marienna, who hid her face from him, and sat drowned in her tears—"She knows of your journey," said the old man; "but go, my son, I will take care of her until your return—you know on what conditions." William shook his head, and, falling at the feet of his mistress, would have taken her hand, but she refused to give it him; her whole frame was so agitated that she was forced to be carried to her chamber: William bore her in his arms, and, in a whisper designed only for her ear, he swore to preserve the life of her father even at the expence of his; and, waiting until she had a little recovered from her delirium, he rushed by the two old men without hearing or speaking to them, and, like a bird that is just escaped from the net of the fowler, struck into the forest, nor stopped running through brambles and briars till he came to fe-

veral cross roads—here he is surprised by a very singular noise; it seems to come from the earth—heavens! what did he behold!—what new adventure was he next to encounter!

CHAP.

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CHAP. XVI.

WILLIAM MEETS WITH A NEW
FRIEND.

WHAT can be more interesting to a reader of sensibility than the fate of a handsome youth, without house, without parents, without money, and without friends; let us then, unlike the rest of the world, attach ourselves to his misfortunes.

The fortrefs and Marienna were three miles in the rear of our adventurer, when he felt a sort of fearful alarm at the

very singular noise that seemed to proceed from the earth—he thought the ground on which he stood trembled under him, and he was certain the branches round him were strangely fluctuating: whilst all these appearances engrossed his fixed attention, the mouth of a cavern opened at his side, and a sort of spectre, or phantom, pushed his head through the aperture, dragging after it a long lean body, which putting itself into an erect posture, presently convinced William it was only a man of the most inoffensive and pitiable description, whose face was pale and hagged, whose eyes were wild, hollow, and dull.

This poor wretch threw himself at the feet of our astonished hero, crying out, “Save me, *Signor*; save me for the mercy of God!”

“Who are you?”

“An unfortunate—an *infelice Cavaliere*, who will attend you through life or death.”

“Speak

"Speak—explain yourself?"

"First, dear good *Signor*, let us fly this cursed spot, or we shall be pursued."

"By whom?"

"By the rascals I have ran from—in the name of Heaven, let us be gone—my external frightens you. *Le Verdo*, when you know *le povero Carlo Sciocco*, you will love him—yes, you will adore him."

Without that particular foible William had imbibed from education, if he had but as few suspicions as other men, he must have been startled at a figure so uncouth, and an address so extraordinary: however, this poor wretch was alone, without arms: if an impostor, what harm could he do the intrepid William; besides, his voice was soft, even to effeminacy—What then could William have to fear?—he followed the impulse of his feeling, generous heart—he

raised this deplorable son of famine, saying to him, "I agree to receive you as the companion of my travels, provided you recount to me with fidelity what brought you hither, and what you have been doing in this forest."

Carlo, wild with joy cried out, "*O Santa Maria divino Giesu!* how happy does this goodness make me. Listen to my history, *Signor*, it is not long, and complete your benefits by permitting me to attach myself *à vostra fortuna*."

"We will talk of that when you have told me who you are."

"*Italiano Signor—Italiano di Napoli—*walk on *Signor*, and lend your attention to *le povero Carlo Sciocco*."

They struck into a narrow path, which led to the great road, when the *Italian* began his adventures after this manner:

My father—ah! he was a great musician of Naples, *Maester di Capello*:

at

at five and twenty he had the felicity to be a husband, and my father; some time after he had the misfortune to fight one of his own profession, because he sung worse than himself: unluckily my father, *directed by fate*, excelled him in every thing—his contemptible adversary was left dead on the field of action—for this noble *rencontre* my father was forced to fly with his family to *Santa Croce*, merely to vegetate, finding it hard to gain a subsistence where he was not known or respected. I was five years old, and destined by *fate* to make a distinguished artist.

After the death of my parents, when I was yet young, I fixed myself at *Frascati*, where I had many scholars for music and composition: besides, I went to sing at a number of magnificent palaces, inhabited by persons of the first distinction, by whom I was kindly treated: yet for all this I was not happy:
my

my mind was wedded to the charms of melancholy—I loved study—I desired to be a philosopher—calm and solitude were the treasures I longed for, and an opportunity presented itself, which I thought would procure me these advantages. It happened by chance, or rather fate, that there lodged in the same house with me a French gentleman, named the Chevalier Mandeville, who travelling through Italy for improvement, stopped at *Frascati* to examine that fine *Tusculum Novum*, built at the foot of a mountain on the same land with the *Tusculum* of the ancients.

With this accomplished *Chevalier* I became intimate; he was passionately fond of music, but more so of my singing, so that we spent all our evenings together. I one day took him with me to the house of Signor Mazarelli, a noble and opulent man, whose daughter, *Signora Laurette Mazarelli*, was one of
my.

my best scholars. My friend, the beau Chevalier; no sooner beheld, than he fell desperately in love with her, and I had the weakness to be corrupted by his presents, so that I promised him my assistance. Laurette entreated to the same purpose, which made me the less reluctant, finding their passion to be mutual: in short, *Signor*, I helped them to escape, and was the companion of their flight. Ah! *Signor*, *Signor*, it was now that I was to carry my favourite plan of retirement into execution; but hear how it turned out.

Signora Laurette was promised by her father to a little rich rascal, whom she detested—but first I shall tell you by what contrivance I got her from the old *Signor's* clutches, who caused her to be watched by the whole family—it was thus: Laurette, by my instigation, pretended indisposition, and did not come out of her chamber. I went to her
chamber

chamber to give her a lesson at six o'clock, holding a handkerchief to my face, and complaining very much of the tooth ach; I only staid with her half an hour, but returned again, pretending to have left some music behind me; in a moment we exchanged dresses; I laid down on the bed, and she, covered with my vestments and flowing wig, with a handkerchief to her face, passed through the midst of her women without being suspected—for my part I was in the *trapola*, and how to escape I knew not, when one of the women came to my bed-side asking if I wanted any thing.

I made no reply, feigning to be drowsy, not *sono ronfatore ma d'un sonno dolce étranquilly*—thinking me asleep she retired, shutting the door after her; immediately I new dressed myself in pantaloons, and a little vest of brown, which I brought with me for the purpose, when in another minute, with the agility of
of

of a professed sweeper, I ascended the chimney; it was now night; I got down from the top, by the help of ropes, to a neighbouring balcony, the door of which was open, from whence I completed my escape.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

THE UNFORTUNATE ELOPEMENT.

ADMIRE, *Signor Cavaliere*, how all circumstances combined in my favour—Had *ſi voſtra Signora* found herſelf in the ſame embarraſſment, perhaps ſhe would not have got out of it ſo well as I did mine; *perche* was fate and predeſtination.

“Tell me,” cried William, “what it is that you call predeſtination?”

“*Si Signor, Si Signor*, what I mean by that word the end of my ſtory will explain—Oh, I am a philoſopher—a
very

very great philosopher.” Long before our sagacious hero had suggested that this *Signor Carlo Sciocco* was an original, and had some difficulty to keep himself from laughing; but willing to draw out his whole stock of knowledge, he invited him, with a very grave air, not to defer the pleasure he should take on hearing his opinion upon that word in philosophy upon which they had been discoursing.

“ Presently, presently, *Signor*,” replied the philosopher, “ but let me first relieve my heart of the sad tale with which it is bursting; for you must know, *Signor*, that having joined the lovers at an appointed spot, where they waited for me, and taken my seat between them in the post-chaise, we scouted away, as if we had been travelling with the winds for a wager—with such swift driving we soon found ourselves near to *Vérolé*, situated on the enchanting banks of the
Cosa;

Cosa; by this time we were all come to our senses, and I was receiving the lovers compliments for having served them so adroitly, when our carriage was stopped by the forsaken lord, who was to have been the husband of *Laurette*; a bloody combat ensued between my friend and his rival, whilst four of his attendants, seizing on the lady, would have carried her off if I had not put myself at the head of our servants, and rescued her from their grasp.

The Lord Aforo had already fallen by the hand of my Chevalier, when the poor *Laurette*, running for protection to the arms of her true lover, the treacherous villain, who lay wounded, raised himself from the ground, and before he expired made the blood of *Laurette* mingle with his own by a stroke so well aimed as to give her instant death. O *Santa Maria*! what became of poor me at this frightful *spettacolo*! *Divino Giesu*!

I see

I see them now before me—alas! poor me!—alas! poor Chevalier!

We forced him into the carriage, for he had lost the use of his reason, and hurried him far from the fatal spot with all possible expedition, saving him from those cruel tortures to which his body would have been exposed, had he been taken by the enemy; for a long time he did not seem sensible to this kindness; however, before we reached Paris, he seemed to recover his serenity insomuch, that I no longer supposed he would attempt any thing against his own life. Having settled his affairs at Paris, he proposed to me that we should shut ourselves up for the rest of our days in his château, situated in the environs of Lyons.

What a scene of felicity did this plan disclose to a man of my deep philosophy. Oh, to what a delicious retreat did he convey me!—it was here that we studied together

together the very moral of philosophy—but, *Signor Chevalier*, before I entertain you with the moral, I shall account for the manner in which you found me; and still better to merit your confidence, *Mi Guadagnare*, you must know, that the *Chevalier* Mandeville, *mio tenero amico*, died some years afterwards consumed by his grief, and a little by his own fault: like myself he believed that all the events of life are predestined; a mighty wise maxim, if he had not followed it a little too closely. One day he walked alone in his garden, reflecting on his passed misfortunes—by chance he found a pistol in his pocket, put there by an imprudent *valet de chambre*, who believed he heard his master order him to do so. Very well, the *Chevalier* says to himself, my troubles are more heavy than I can bear—here is a pistol in my hand—it is the gift of my destiny—where will be the harm of my using it.

The

The Chevalier recollected he had not made his will; he put the pistol again into his pocket, entered his cabinet, disposed of his fortune in my favour, then used the heaven-directed instrument to his own destruction. When I heard this dreadful news it cost me a derangement of intellects, from which I did not recover for many weeks: nay, perhaps I was a little mad—when possessed of a good fortune I determined on going to Paris, and dissipating it in the stile of a gentleman: this was done in a short time, not in balls or feasts, but I had soon a great number of nominal friends, and when I had assisted them they all turned out ungrateful—*perehe*—apparently that could not be—I lent, I gave on every side, until I had nothing left to lend or to give—I did not repine at my poverty—I said all men have wants; I have that which will silence them—experience taught me not
to

to count with too much facility on the sensibility of men. "It is the worse for themselves," said I; "if they will not oblige their brother, they cast from them the best treasure they possess—a benevolent heart."

At length, *Signor tropo Amabile*, being unable to help others, I tried to serve myself—I fung, I *guadagnai* money, and resolved to travel over the towns, of France to amass the wherewith *ritornare* to my own country.

It was going through this cursed forest that I met a banditti, who robbed me without mercy; I told them I was an Italian musician, and I complained to them of my misfortunes: they said I should serve them in the character of a *boffone*, and drove me before them into their cavern to divert their women: eight days they held me in this abominable *tarpola*; yesterday they brought in a rich prize, and to rejoice over it they

they this morning set themselves to drinking *l'eau de vie*. I had the art to slip into their glasses a pinch of opium, which I found last night in the pocket of their prize; they soon fell asleep, when venturing to remove the trap door, which was covered with branches of trees, I saw you, *benevole Cavaliere*; your youth and your features inspired me with confidence *per Dio*; if you please, *lasciami*, I will follow you through all the world *l'ascianci*, serve you as a guide, a servant; refuse not to count *per la vitu*, on the gratitude, the love, the fidelity of poor *Carlo Sciocco*.

"Your misfortunes," said William, "and the critical situation in which I have found you, engages me to subscribe to your demands; assure yourself that I shall not abandon you; but what fate do you expect to share with a man so unfortunate as I am? I will not use dissimulation—I have neither friends, parents, country, fortune, nor asylum—

I had one benefactor; he has driven me from his presence. I have an adorable mistress, from whom I am separated for ever. Fly for your own sake, fly from a wretch so every way destitute—unite not your fate to that of an outcast.”

“*Santa Croce*,” exclaimed *Sciocco*, “shall I abandon the good fortune Divine Providence has procured for me—yes, my dear friend, it was arranged in the order of things; at what hour you was to pass by this part of the forest, it was destined that at the same instant I should creep out of my *trapola*—that I should throw myself at your feet—that you should listen to me—that I should walk with you, recounting my adventures—and that we should determine never to quit each other—*certamente* we are expressly predestined to associate together.”

William saw plainly enough that *Signor Carlo Sciocco* was a downright simpleton; however, he discovered through
all

all the rubbish of errors, by which his understanding was obscured, a humble, feeling, and grateful heart, which made him very readily accept of him for his companion.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE JAILERESS OF ST. MARCELLIN.

CARLO, penetrated almost to madness by William's condescension, began to exhibit a new specimen of his folly—"Santa Maria," cried he, "*divina Croce di Grefu vi singrazio.* Good, generous *Cavaliere*, I will be your slave, and you shall be my master—you shall marry—you shall have children—I will carry them in my arms—*O Carissimi figlivoli!* I see them holding out their little hands to me—I shall love them as tenderly as their *te new padre*—to live with them
and

and with you shall constitute all my felicity."

This jargon, half French, half Italian, as well as the action of *Carlo*, very much diverted William, but his mirth was soon converted into sorrow—he perceived, marching towards them, a large posse of men, at which sight his heart failed him a little—he knew not for what—Sciocco re-assured him, by declaring them to be merchants. By this time the cavalcade had approached nearer, which made Carlo change his tone—"Oh!" cried he, uttering a loud cry of desperation, "*O Dio! O Dio!* there is amongst them an accomplice of those villains I have just quitted."

William, thunderstruck at the words of his companion, felt, in that moment, the full force of his imprudence for having joined the unfortunate stranger; what was now to be done—they would have turned off from the great road, if the officers of justice, together with the

robber, had not prevented them, and stopped their flight, by arresting them in the king's name.

William boldly declared his innocence, but the guards were inflexible; they reviled both him and his companion, loaded them with chains, and, in this manner, conducted them to the town. The wretch, who caused this cruelty to be exercised upon them, was highly diverted with their sufferings—"Ah, Ah!" said he, "my old *Sciocco*, thou agreeable buffoon of our amiable society, what, thou hast forsook thy friends of the cavern, and taken up with a new comrade!"

The tears that trickled from the eyes of our hero, at the indignity offered to his honour, were instantly dried up by the burning blushes with which shame had covered his cheek—as to *Carlo Sciocco*, to convince the whole party that neither of them were guilty, he offered to repeat all the adventures of his life—
but,

but, alas! nobody would listen to them—so that, turning to William, he said to him, shedding a great many drops of liquid sorrow—“Take courage—*Miro Caro Maestro*—perceive you not that this is the will of heaven, and the work of our destiny; do you think the Chevalier Mandeville would have put an end to his life, if his fate had not compelled him so to do?” Here he was forced to let fall the thread of his eloquence: they had entered the streets of St. Marcellin, and, in the midst of a thousand spectators, were conveyed to the prison—every body were inclined to bestow their pity on William, but not a word in favour of the poor *Carlo*, it being the general opinion he must belong to the banditti, because he was neither young, handsome, nor of a good countenance.

I pass over all the lamentations of William, and all the philosophy of the ill-starred *Sciocco*, to bring them to the

night preceding that day when they were to be questioned—the question—odious word—odious punishment—a thousand times worse than death in its most terrific form!

The two friends were shut up in different cells, bordering on each other—William, about midnight, had thrown himself on a truss of straw, and was trying to fortify the weakness of his mind against the torments preparing for his body, when suddenly he was drawn, from the deepest despair, by a soft voice, which asked him if he was awake—“Alas!” replied he, “is it possible I should sleep with the terrors of the rack before my eyes?—but who are you—and for what are you come hither?”

“I am a woman,” returned the voice; “I believe you innocent—I am touched by your youth—I come to give you liberty, if you promise to be grateful.”

“Ah!”

“ Ah !” interrupted he, “ can you believe me innocent of the foul crime for which I stand accused, yet yourself suppose me capable of one that is still more foul?—Oh! think better of me—think not I can ever be ungrateful.”

“ Wait then, and take courage.”—Again all was silent, when he began to reflect whether if his deliverer was really in earnest he ought to accept of his liberty on the offered terms, confirming, by his flight, that he was indeed guilty of the crime for which he had been imprisoned.

Before he had determined on any thing, a woman, young and beautiful, entered his noisome cell, carrying a dark lanthorn in her hand—“ Come,” said she, “ follow me, young unfortunate.”

William no longer balanced between two opinions—“ Oh! thou,” said he, “ most generous of women, double your favours, and double my gratitude—I have a friend innocent and afflicted as myself,

myself, free him also—I cannot profit by your gracious mercy, if it be not extended to my companion.”

“I grant what you ask with all my heart,” she replied; “but you must never forget what I have done for you;”—saying which, she opened the next dungeon, where his soul was pierced by the groans of the Italian, who lay stretched upon his straw—William softly called to him—“*Sciocco!* Dear Carlo! God has sent us a deliverer.”

“*Santa Maria!*”

“Hush! be silent, or we are lost beyond redemption.”—He put his hand on Carlo’s mouth, fearing what mischief his indiscretion might produce; he took him by the arm, and, conducted by their benefactress, ascended a flight of steps, by which they entered an apartment very handsomely furnished, where she made them sit down to calm their agitated spirits.

“*Monfieur*

“Monfieur William,” faid ſhe, “I have ſaved you and your friend—wherever you go to enjoy your liberty I ſhall go with you.” Our hero hardly knew what answer to return, but *Sciocco* let looſe his tranſports—“We will never abandon you—*generoſa dona.*”—“Oh! my *Maeftro*, let us ſwear eternal fidelity to the moſt”——“Enough,” cried the lady, interrupting him with a ſmile, “we have not a moment to waſte on compliments—come with me.”

She led them, through many intricacies, to a narrow ſtreet, where a carriage waited for them, into which they all entered, and, at break of day, came within fight of *Montélimart*, where they made no reſt, paſſing, with equal rapidity, through the towns of *Dieu le Fil*, *la Palu*, *Mornas*, *Orange*, and *Coufteron*, making their firſt ſtop at *Avignon*, where they put up at an hotel, to crown their fatigues with ſome hours of reſoſe.

During their long journey William had found himself very much distressed by their liberatress having informed them that she was the wife of the *Conciegge* of the prison from whence she had stolen them—that she had been cruelly used by the most jealous of men, which made her greatly prefer the company of her prisoners to that of her husband.

If the youth had not been able to construe her declaration in his own favour, the expression of her eyes would not suffer him to remain in any but a feigned ignorance of her infamous intentions; after which discovery he could hardly prevail on himself to treat her with common politeness; so true it is, that a young married woman, however beautiful or accomplished, in shewing a preference for any man but her husband, is not more an object of contempt, in the eyes of the world, than in those of the
very

very man for whom she has forfeited her reputation.

Seeing him extremely backward in receiving her advances, on their arrival at *Avignon* she spoke to him of her love without restraint.

“How is this, Madame?” replied William; “have you not already declared yourself to be the wife of another?—what a return should I make to your goodness if I should dare attempt to sully the purity of that character which has been revered in all ages, and in all countries?”

She darted at him a look fraught with indignation—“*Monfieur*,” said she, “it must be confessed you preach well, yet I am no friend to your doctrine, particularly in my own situation—I married when I was a child—in one month I detested my husband—I took refuge in a convent—he followed me thither—I came back to live with him again—I thought him more detestable than ever!

how

now could I help it?"—"Certainly not," cries Carlo; "the thing was decreed in heaven."—"In fourteen days," continued the lady, "I once more quitted the disagreeable creature for a very amiable young man, who abandoned me when he had brought me to Paris—so, having nothing better to do, I went back to St. Marcellin; I had then the condescension to forgive my husband, with whom I had been tormented six long months, when seeing you, by chance, brought to the prison, I liked you—I released you—and you promised to be grateful."

"My gratitude," said William, with the dignity of true honour, "you shall always, Madame, command—but, my love, never."

"Poltroon," rejoined the fair fury, "know that you insult me not with impunity—know also that my education has not been like that of other women—I can measure a sword, or fire a pistol,
with

with the most undaunted of your sex; and, if you will not love, I will force you to fight me."

William walked coldly out of the room, saying—"He was much tired, and would wait upon her in the morning to receive her commands." Carlo staid behind, hoping to calm her resentment, with which good design he exhausted his whole stock of philosophical arguments, to make her understand that she interrupted the order, and broke the equilibrium of things, by the challenge she had given; that a woman should keep within the bounds prescribed to her sex; and that it must be a supernatural predestination which could carry her to the field to measure swords with a duellist." Part only he did say, the rest he intended to have said, if she had not given him a blow on each side of his face that lighted up two lamps in his eyes, which served to shew him the way from her presence without a candle.

They

They no more ventured to put themselves in her way that evening, and, before she was awake the next morning they had stolen a march, and was many miles from the hotel at *Avignon*. Let us leave them to pursue their journey on foot, and inquire what has become of Marienna since the departure of William from the fortress.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

A NIGHT IN THE FOREST.

MARIENNA, with her beautiful face pressed against the bars of her windows, had watched the retreating steps of her lover as far as her tearful eyes were able to distinguish his graceful figure; she saw him raise, and she saw him let fall that fatal drawbridge which it was likely would separate them for ever: happily her heart told her he would never try to regain his passage over it at the price of her father's destruction; it was this only consideration which could afford any consolation

consolation to her deep-rooted sorrow—she had lost her lover, but she should preserve her father.

The recollection of the danger to which he was exposed turned her thoughts on him whose unsleeping vengeance would always pursue him; and every man, who in future he might wish to make the executioner of his bloody purpose, might not have the affections or the heart of William.

“What better can I do,” said she to herself, “than quit this once happy, now odious fortress—to go seek my father—to tell him of his danger—to plant myself at his side—to watch when it approaches—and to ward it from him?”

What a charming sentiment!—it is hoped our readers will not suppose William’s image had any part in her wish to fly from the forest to enter on a world unknown—oh, no; she certainly could not want to see him again so very soon;
it

it was but a few minutes before that she saw him let down the drawbridge.

“What,” cried she, still continuing to reason with her own reflection, “what will Villeroy say if I should fly from him?—ought I not to love, to respect, my dear, my kind, my paternal protector?—Yes, I love Villeroy—I love my benefactor—but I fly from Dorance—I fly from the enemy of my father.—Oh! dear, merciful Villeroy! Oh! harsh, cruel Dorance.” She wept, she wrung her hands, but she determined on flight.

She thought of a thousand expedients to effect her escape—one only appeared practicable; it was dangerous, yet not impossible. She removed the box which received the lock on the inside of her door; and when Germain, as was his constant custom, turned the key at night, he did not perceive that it wanted any fastening—her first descent was to the subterraneous temple, remembering that

William

William had been conducted thither by Germain from a cave in the forest, where with indefatigable labour she worked out her way through a thousand turnings and windings, with almost supernatural courage, of a sudden it deserted the dark horror that every where surrounded her, sent her back trembling to the tomb of her mother, intending to take the lamp which was never extinguished.

She stopped, and kneeling down on the steps of the monument, she thought a feeble voice broke upon her ear through the marble which covered the coffin.—

“O my mother! my mother!” she exclaimed, “is it you who I hear—are those your melancholy accents—speak—what would you exact of your terrified daughter—are your sacred ashes disturbed by my present purpose—of what is it that you would advertise me?”

“No!”

“No!” added she, after a pause’
“she neither sees nor hears me—how wonderful is the force of imagination!”—
She took the lamp in her trembling hand, and was turning from the spot, when something presented itself to her view, which augmented her terrors to a degree beyond the fortitude of her nature to support. It was a sword with this scroll tied to it—“Stained with the blood of my wife and my son.”—Annexed to this terrible trophy were the letters which had passed between her two too guilty parents—she read only this sentence—
“Adieu, dear Longuville! come soon, and rejoin your Adele.” Her eyes turned away in confusion, and even at the tomb of her mother she pitied the injured man whose hand had destroyed her.

Grasping the funeral lamp, she made no more stops till she entered the forest through the mouth of the cavern—doubtless she was going to search for her
father

father—but now that she was free, would there be any harm in her inquiring a little after William—“ Find him first,” said her innocent heart, “ and afterwards he will assist thee in discovering thy father.”

It was thus that Marienna reasoned as she sat down to repose at the foot of a tree, having first blown out the lamp for fear it might betray her, if any evil-disposed persons should pass that way. Again she thought there would be more safety for her in the branches than at the foot of the tree, upon which she softly climbed into its friendly bosom, and sat down amongst its branches very much at her ease, in a sort of green cradle that Nature seemed to have formed for her reception.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

